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Voice

Downtown St. Paul



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Your Community News & Information Source

February 2025

BMT works to boost number of Black male teachers

Jake Spitzack
Staff Writer

Fewer than half of one percent of Minnesota's elementary school teachers are Black men. The downtown nonprofit Black Men Teach (BMT) is on a mission to dramatically change that number by placing 400 additional Black male teachers in the state's elementary schools by 2035. The organization is partnering with St. Paul Public Schools and several other organizations to achieve that goal.

BMT executive director Markus Flynn said that the organization hopes to improve outcomes for students of color. He explained that Black boys are more likely to succeed in school if they have Black teachers as role models.

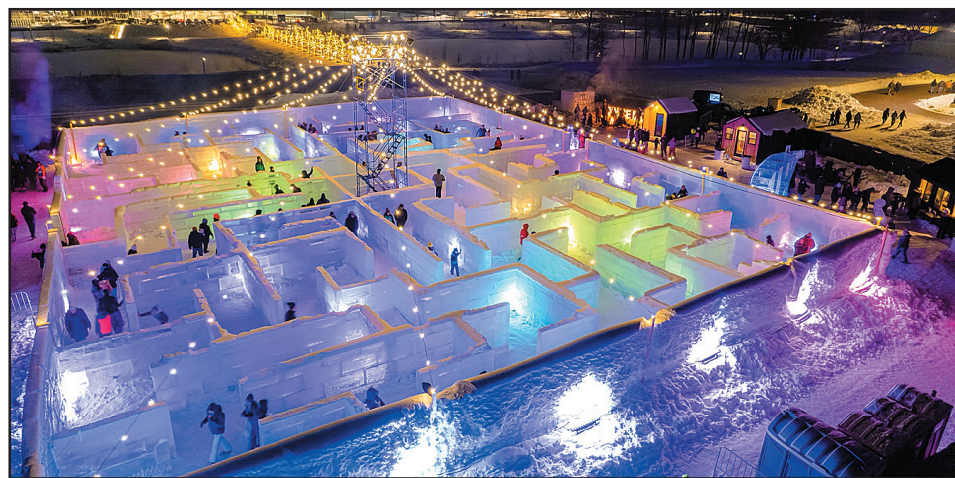
It's estimated that just 2% of teachers in the country are Black men. While 12% of Minnesota's elementary school students are Black, there are fewer than 50 Black male teachers at elementary schools statewide. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul Public Schools has approximately 32,000 students and 2,255 teachers. Nearly 7,700 students are Black, and the number of Black teachers is 264. Statewide graduation rates last year were 88.7% for White students, 85.4% for Asian, 72.1% for Black students, 69.2% for Latino and 61.3% for American Indian.

BMT recruits Black men to pursue teaching careers, prepares and places

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Minnesota Ice sets Guinness World Record

Effort led by West St. Paul native



The record setting ice maze at TCO Stadium.

Tim Spitzack
Editor

One of the state's newest winter festivals recently gained international notoriety by setting a Guinness World Record for the largest-ever ice maze. St. Paul-based Minnesota Ice captured the honors on Jan. 10 for its near 19,000-square-foot maze at the Minnesota Ice Festival, which continues through Feb. 16 at TCO Stadium at Viking Lakes in Eagan. It smashed the previous record of nearly 12,900 square feet set 15 years ago in Buffalo, N.Y.

The feat was the ambitious goal of West St. Paul native Robbie Harrell, owner of Minnesota Ice, and its success reveals his entrepreneurial spirit, ability to overcome obstacles and desire for creating an opportunity for

people to enjoy wintertime in Minnesota.

The inaugural Minnesota Ice Festival was held in 2022 at Viking Lakes in Eagan and attracted nearly 60,000 people to the ice maze, ice sculptures and other winter-related festivities. Buoyed by its success, Harrell and his team worked to expand the event for the winter of 2023 by adding more entertainment, a scavenger hunt and free giveaways. But Mother Nature did not cooperate. With temps topping 50 degrees in late December that year, he was forced to pull the plug on the ticketed event.

"We didn't want to put on a bad experience," said Harrell. "We canceled, issued full refunds and lost a boatload of money." He was also stuck with at least three semi-trailer

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Johnson

Bach Society hires new director

Tim Spitzack
Editor

St. Paul-based Bach Society of Minnesota (BSM), one of the first organizations in North America to advance the work and legacy of Johann Sebastian Bach, has named Grant Johnson as its new executive director. He succeeds Dr. Yunyue Liu, who has held the position since 2017 and is now the organization's operations director.

Johnson has been executive director of Denver-based St. Martin's Chamber Choir since 2022 and will continue in that role while also working with BSM. He is a professional violinist and orchestra librarian. He was previously a member of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Phoenix Symphony and served as interim executive director of the Reading Symphony Orchestra in Pennsylvania. He has also held library positions with the Minnesota Bach Ensemble and Aspen Music Festival, and has worked in various capacities with the Atlanta Symphony,

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Manager named to newly expanded Downtown Improvement District

Jake Spitzack
Staff Writer

Steering the next wave of efforts to help revitalize downtown St. Paul is Kris Zagyva, who was recently named general manager of the St. Paul Downtown Alliance's St. Paul Downtown Improvement District (SPDID). A native of Budapest, Hungary and longtime Californian, he brings more than 20 years of experience



Zagyva

managing downtown quality-of-life initiatives, including in Hollywood and Beverly Hills, and in Houston, Tex., where he

managed 120 employees for the Downtown Houston Management District. He started in St. Paul on Dec. 1, focusing on establishing the Alliance's Clean & Safe programs in areas of downtown that were added to the SPDID boundaries on Jan. 1 by way of a City Council vote last summer. Through the Clean & Safe program, teams of street ambassadors remove litter and graffiti, help pedestrians with way-

finding, report illegal activities they witness, and more.

"We expanded to include Lowertown and that added 43 blocks to our deployment," said Zagyva. "Altogether we have approximately 80 blocks that we're covering now, plus Skyways.... My main goal is to really grow this program and take it to another level. In 2024, we had 13 members, and we've now moved it up to 32 members."

The number of safety ambassadors has increased from 3 to 10, clean ambassadors from 2 to 7 and supervisors from 2 to 4. On Feb. 1, eight metro safety ambassadors will join the team to help with cleanliness and safety at three Metro Transit light rail platforms. They will be onsite 7 a.m.-11 p.m. daily.

The SPDID formerly covered about half of downtown but now encompasses all of it, from the Xcel En-

ergy Center to CHS Field and from the Mississippi River to Interstate 94. It includes both commercial and residential properties and is funded through property taxes from property owners within its boundaries, as well as voluntary contributions from the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County. Since its inception in 2021 to this past December, calls to police for quality-of-life crimes and

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Minnesota Ice

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loads of supplies. Fortunately, he was able to use them for this year's festival.

Harrell's willingness to tackle the event this year stems from the optimism he's learned by overcoming other challenges with Minnesota Ice, which creates custom-made ice displays, ice bars, specialty cocktail ice, and packaged ice for retail stores.

The 2009 Two Rivers High School graduate fell

into the business by happenstance. After graduating high school, he initially attended the University of Wisconsin-Stout to study supply chain management but transferred to the University of St. Thomas to pursue entrepreneurial studies. The entrepreneurial bug bit him hard and he dropped out of St. Thomas to start his own company – just four credits shy of earning his bachelor's degree. He was introduced



Minnesota Ice founder Robbie Harrell accepts the Guinness award from Brittany Dunn, Guinness World Records adjudicator.

to the niche ice market after meeting professional ice carver Trevor Pearson and helping him deliver his creations to customers.

Harrell founded Minnesota Ice in 2013 in the garage of his St. Paul home and later rented space in Shakopee and Minneapolis before moving to the company's 20,000-square-foot headquarters at 755 Prior Ave. N., St. Paul. Today, Minnesota Ice employs nearly 70 and serves clients across the nation. Pearson is the lead ice sculptor.

The company's big break came in 2018 when it landed numerous accounts for ice

displays for companies hosting events for Super Bowl LII, held at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis. The next year it won a contract with Holiday Station Stores to provide packaged ice, and then discovered the market for specialty cocktail ice: ice crafted into different shapes and sizes and featuring logos or artwork.

The company was on an upward trajectory until the spring of 2020, when COVID-19 forced the closure of restaurants, bars and many events – all primary clients for Minnesota Ice. With the help of the federal Paycheck Protection Program, Harrell looked for anything possible

to keep his then-20 employees busy. They developed an online store to sell their own ice products and cocktail kits that included all ingredients but alcohol. They also partnered with restaurants to sell meal packages. When he learned from a friend that the University of Minnesota was looking for one-time-use facemasks, he purchased a machine in Chicago and began manufacturing them at his St. Paul facility.

That December, Harrell received a most unexpected call from the Zephyr Theatre in Stillwater, saying they wanted 3,000 blocks of ice.

"Nobody buys three thousand ice blocks," said Harrell. "We're the largest manufacturer of sculpture grade ice and we produce 450 blocks a week. I said, 'What do you guys want to do?' They said, 'We want to build an ice maze.'"

Minnesota Ice gladly took the order and supplied the ice. The event was a great success and attracted about 30,000 people, said Harrell, but was canceled a year later due to financial difficulties with the theater. The silver lining in losing that large account was that Harrell was introduced to the world of

ice mazes, which brings us full circle to the founding of the Minnesota Ice festival.

"We learned a lot of good lessons in the first year of what to do and how to make it better," said Harrell.

In addition to the massive ice maze at this year's event, the festival features a 44-by-80-foot skating rink, multi-lane ice slide, ice bar, food trucks, outdoor firepits and 50-by-100-foot warming tent.

It also features the Carver Cup ice sculpting competition Jan. 30-Feb. 1. Ice sculpting teams from across the country will create spectacular works of art and compete for a cash prize and the Carver Cup trophy.

Festival hours are 4-10 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturdays and 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$24.99 for ages 15 and older and \$12.99 for ages 5-14. For more information, visit minnesotaice-festival.com.

Minnesota Ice also hosts the Minnesota Ice Bar series, which features ice bars around the Twin Cities. Nine restaurants are participating this year. A map of their locations is available at minnesota-ice.com.

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Johnson

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Cleveland Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

“As a native Minnesotan, I am honored to be joining the Bach Society of Minnesota as executive director,” said Johnson in a statement.

“The rich history of high artistic standards, as well as newer initiatives like the Mobile Mini-Concerts and Outside the Box series, show the diverse showcases that the Bach Society has to offer. I look forward to partnering with the musicians, staff, board of directors, and most importantly directly

with the community to continue to bring our great music to Minnesota.”

In his youth, Johnson was a member of the Minnesota Boychoir, touring and recording with them extensively. He served as vice president of the Young Musicians of Minnesota, and as a student at the University of Minnesota was concertmaster for multiple orchestras. Johnson plays regularly with many Colorado ensembles including

the Baroque Chamber Orchestra of Colorado, Boulder Philharmonic, Fort Collins Symphony, Greeley Philharmonic, and frequently serves as guest concertmaster with the Boulder Symphony. He specializes in baroque organ music and has appeared as a featured performer for the American Guild of Organists.

The 2025 Minnesota Bach Festival takes place February 28-March 30 at venues around the Twin Cities. For

more information on the following performances, visit www.bachsocietymn.org.

February 28-March 1 - Mobile Mini-Concerts

March 8-9 - Your Voice – a Community Sing-along!

March 9 - Mozart Requiem

March 22 - Celebrate the Birthday! (Master Class on Bach’s Keyboard Music followed by Community Concert)

March 29 - Bach &

Friends Workshop
March 30 - Baroque Tango: Rhythms of Desire, Longing and Passion

Bach Society of Minnesota was founded in 1932 and is headquartered at 275 E 4th St. in downtown St. Paul. It promotes world-class performances with period instruments and historical performance practices that evoke the depths and passions of Bach’s compositions.

Zagyva

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concerns fell by 40% within the SPDID boundaries. A handful of other large cities in the country have similar downtown improvement district programs, which aim to supplement city services.

In the long term, Zagyva plans to deepen the Alliance’s partnerships with the St. Paul Police Department and several other organizations to navigate the complex issue of revitalizing downtown in the wake of the pandemic. He noted that crime numbers are trending down, and the biggest prob-

lems currently are related to drug use and homelessness.

“In my experience, you’ve got short-term resolution and then you have long-term resolutions,” he said. “I like to reach out to other cities and see what they have going on when it comes to drugs, because normally if it’s being distributed in one city it’s happening in another.... I think now with us being able to provide more boots on the ground, lay more eyes on more block spaces, we’re going to be able to deter more smaller crimes.”

His decision to come to St. Paul wasn’t just for the job.

“Over the course of the past year, I was visiting St. Paul-Minneapolis and the adjacent areas and just really fell in love with the state,” he said. “I heard some information about St. Paul and the [SPDID] expansion and I just really wanted to be part of that history, that milestone of being able to expand change, and take all the years of experience I have and bring it here.

“I think everybody really learned [during the pandemic] that they can work from home and preferred it, and I think that changed how downtowns are operating,” he added. “A lot of downtowns are now trying to

shift from commercial space to living space and having storefronts on the first floors. They’re mirroring a lot of the business ideas that New York and San Francisco have. But we’re all starting to finally bounce back.”

In addition to the Safe and Clean program, the St. Paul Downtown Alliance operates Grow Downtown, which connects new businesses with short-term free leases in vacant storefronts. Last spring, it also unveiled its Downtown Investment Strategy, outlining population growth goals for downtown which include adding 20,000 residents, 20,000 workers for a total

of 75,000, and increasing the number of annual visitors by 20% to 10 million. The strategy identified three ways the public and private sectors can work together to reach the goals: convert office space into housing, invest in pedestrian-oriented streetscape improvements and advance downtown St. Paul’s most strategic redevelopment opportunities.

According to Zagyva, keeping the streets safe and clean improves perceptions about downtown, attracts new businesses and helps retain existing ones, increases property values, and stimulates the overall vitality of the community.

“I’m very grateful and honored to be able to be part of this,” said Zagyva. “I know St. Paul Alliance has been working tirelessly to get this expansion to take place and it took some grit to make it happen. They’re very excited about it and I’m very committed to making sure that this is successful, and St. Paul becomes better and better every day.”

Zagyva is an avid horse rider, with a few steeds of his own. He’s also in the process of getting a commercial helicopter license, which he may use to give tours of the Twin Cities.

For more information on the SPDID, visit spdidd.org.

BMT

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them in schools, and works to retain them in those positions. Over the past four years, BMT has received \$500,000 from General Mills’ Box Tops for Education to provide scholarship and student debt relief opportunities for prospective teachers. BMT helps place new licensed teachers in its eight partner elementary schools, each of which has a student body that’s at least 40% Black. They are Maxfield in St. Paul, Nellie

Stone Johnson in Minneapolis, Monroe, Crest View and Zanewood in Brooklyn Park, Eisenhower and Tanglen in Hopkins, and North Park in Columbia Heights. Since it was founded in 2018, BMT has placed 13 teachers, and another 20 are awaiting placement. More than 30 college students and 20 high school students are in the pipeline.

Located at the Osborn370 building, BMT originally aimed to place 100 but raised the bar last spring after forming the Thrive by 2035 coalition with St. Paul Public Schools, the



Black Men Teach participants at the Celebrating the Half Percent Conference in 2023.

University of Minnesota, Metro State University, and a handful of other entities.

The coalition expects to adopt its action plan later this year. Once the plan is

complete, the number of partner elementary schools is expected to jump to about

100. For more information, visit blackmenteach.org.



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{ THE FULLER FILES } by Roger Fuller

Stacie Stanley has been named superintendent of St. Paul Public Schools. She succeeds Joe Gothard, who resigned last year to become superintendent for Madison Metropolitan School District in Wisconsin. Stanley previously was superintendent of Edina Public Schools, where she led the district's strategic plan to create accelerated student achievement across

all demographic groups, including a comprehensive literacy plan. Prior to that she served as an associate superintendent at Eden Prairie Schools and has held school and administrative leadership roles in Burnsville-Eagan-Savage School District 191, Roseville Area Schools and East Metro Integration District. She is also the current president-elect of

the Minnesota Association of School Administrators, a statewide organization of education leaders. Stanley earned her bachelor's degree in K-8 elementary education and her master's in education at St. Catherine University, and holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Bethel University.

Catrice O'Neal has been named director of Ramsey County Workforce Solutions and the executive director of the Workforce Innovation Board. Workforce Solutions, in partnership with the Workforce Innovation Board of Ramsey County, focuses on strengthening the economic vitality of Ramsey

County residents and businesses through workforce development programs and services. O'Neal previously worked for the city of Brooklyn Park, where she served as the Workforce Development program director. Prior to this role, O'Neal served as a program manager for BrookLynk, a youth workforce development program in Brooklyn Park. She also has served as the director of Out-of-School-Time Programs for the Plymouth Christian Youth Center, and currently serves as an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas. O'Neal holds an associate of science in criminal justice from Minneapolis Community and Technical

College, a bachelor of science in social work from St. Catherine University and a master of social work from Augsburg University.

The City of St. Paul plans to redevelop Osborn Plaza on Wabasha Street to add more seating, event space, trees, greenspace and a pet relief area. Bids will be accepted this spring and construction is expected to begin this summer. The park has been previously known as both Ecolab Plaza and Capital Centre Plaza.

Enhanced bus service is now being considered for the Riverview Transit Corridor along West Seventh Street, from downtown to the Mall of America. Streetcars were originally planned for the route but were dropped after strong opposition from area businesses.

Metro Transit plans to expand its Transit Rider Investment Program on buses and trains to provide for increased fare inspections, more security officers, and trash and graffiti removal.

The St. Paul Growers Association, which operates the St. Paul Farmers Market, will host its annual meeting on February 15. The St.

Paul Farmers Market, 290 E. Fifth St., is open 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturdays during the winter.

Red Bull Heavy Metal will be held 2-5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 1 at the State Capitol grounds. This rail-riding snowboarding contest features some of the world's best rail riders. It will feature three competition zones, each highlighting different aspects of street snowboarding. Free.

Camp Bar and Cabaret, 490 N. Robert St., is hosting the following comedians: Caleb Elliott, Feb. 7-8; Mary Santora, Feb. 14-15; Cory Michaelis, Feb. 21-22; and Brian Simpson, Feb. 28-Mar. 1.

Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar St., will host a cabaret presentation of "The Music Man" at noon, Sunday, Feb. 9.

Burl Art Gallery, 308 Prince St., is hosting its Artistic Kaleidoscope show through March 22.

The skyway walking group meets at 9 a.m. on Tuesdays at US Bank, 101 5th St. E. The group travels a mile and a half through the skyways at a casual pace.

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Bouldering Project to open this fall

Climbing enthusiasts and fitness fans will be thrilled to know that the Bouldering Project will open this fall at 42 W. Water St., St. Paul. The gym will feature more than 30,000 square feet of bouldering walls, fitness and yoga studios, youth spaces, fitness spaces, saunas, single-stall bathrooms with showers, and coworking spaces. Since opening its first gym in Seattle in 2011, Bouldering Project has expanded to 14 locations across the county, including Minneapolis. The St. Paul location will be at Farwell-on-Water, a mixed-use development near Harriet Island Regional Park that opened last year with apartments, artist studios and professional workspaces.

featuring **The Fairlanes**, 1-2 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 12. The dynamic four-part a cappella group will perform doo-wop, classic pop, NS R&B hits of the '50s and '60s, including sweet love songs and nostalgic favorites. \$10. Dessert included. Register by Feb 5.

How to Use Venmo Safely, noon-1 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 13. Learn all about Venmo, the popular mobile payment service. \$29. Registration required.

Current Ecology/Climate Change Research, 10-11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 13. Sam Reed with the U of M Institute on the Environment will discuss the pressing issues of ecology and climate change and offer practical ways to reduce

environmental impact and preserve nature. \$3. Registration required.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Center of MN, 10-11 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 18. Learn about the Rehab Center, which is one of the country's oldest wildlife hospitals and one of world's busiest, treating 20,000 animals annually. \$7. Registration required.

Will I have Chronic Pain Forever?, 1:30-3 p.m., Monday, Feb. 24. Explore nontraditional treatment approaches for chronic pain and fibromyalgia. \$3. Registration required.

Nature Connections, 10-11:15 am., Tuesday, Feb. 25. Join the conversation to share stories that have furthered your connections

with and understanding of nature. \$10. Register by Feb. 18.

White Supremacy, Culture Warlords, and Digital Literacy, 11 a.m.-noon, Wednesday, Feb. 26, March 5 and 12. Uncover the history and cultural "logics" of white supremacy and the rapid-moving radicalization of the internet era. \$9 (three sessions). Registration required.

Capital Bicycle: Am I Right for an E-Bike?, 10-11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 27. This informative class designed specifically for seniors explores e-bikes and recumbent bikes, including their features, safety issues, and potential health benefits. \$5.

Union Depot

The following events are held at Union Depot, 214 4th St. E. For more information, visit uniondepot.org/event-calendar.

Doggie Depot, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Feb. 1. Includes the crowning of the Canine King & Queen, giveaways, a marketplace, and visits with pet experts.

Station Sounds, 6-8 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 20. 1881 by Lake Elmo Inn presents a new musical artist/group every third Thursday of the month.

Free yoga classes are offered 5:30-6:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, and 9-10 a.m., Saturdays.

Games galore, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. each Wednesday. Gi-

ant-size games are available or bring your own. Free. All ages.

Gatsby at 100

Friends of the St. Paul Public Library is hosting "The Great Gatsby" performed by Literature to Life, 6:30-8 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 12 at George Latimer Central Library, 90 W. 4th St., St. Paul. This is part of a series of programs in 2025 to mark the 100th anniversary of the publication of "The Great Gatsby" by St. Paul native F. Scott Fitzgerald. Set in the Jazz Age of the 1920s, the novel explores ideas about class and society, materialism and the American Dream.

TPAC events

Unless noted, all activities take place at Thompson Park Activity Center, 1200 Stassen Lane, West St. Paul. Events are for ages 55 and older. To register, call 651-403-8300.

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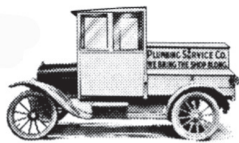
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Valid with coupon Mon.-Fri. at Mendota Heights location. Not valid with other offers. Exp. 2/28/25. 651-436-7196. zesdiner.com.

Arts & Entertainment

Children's Museum
10 7th St. W.
St. Paul
651-225-6000
mcm.org

Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice, through May 11. Travel back in time and discover what life was like when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Dig for fossils, explore a swampy bog and oozing volcano, climb through icy terrain and more.

Exhibits and activities include "The Scramble," "The Studio," "Creativity Jam," "Sprouts," "Our World," "Forces at Play," "Shipwreck Adventures" and "Imaginopolis." Tickets are \$17 on weekdays and \$19 on weekends. Admission is free the first Sunday of each month; reservations are required. The next free date is February 2.

History Center
345 W. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul
651-259-3000
mnhs.org

"Girlhood (It's complicated)," through June 1, 2025. This exhibit from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History features more than 100 objects that explore how young women have influenced politics, education, work, health and fashion.

"Reframing our Stories" is featured through October 2025. The exhibit was created from a decades-old box of photographs simply labeled "Indians." Inside the box were dozens of pictures of Native community members, organizations, activities, and events that are relevant today.

"Our Home: Native Minnesota" features historic

and contemporary photographs, maps and artifacts that show how Minnesota's native communities have retained cultural practices, teachings and values.

Other exhibits include "Minnesota's Greatest Generation," "Then Now Wow," "Grainland" and "Weather Permitting." Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and college students, and \$8 for children ages five to 17. Admission and parking are free on Thursdays, 4-8 p.m.

History Theatre
30 E. 10th St.
St. Paul
651-292-4323
Historytheatre.com

"The Root Beer Lady," through Feb. 23. Discover the story of the indomitable Dorothy Molter, the last legal non-indigenous

DRUMLine Live comes to the Ordway Center Feb. 21. Experience high-energy choreographed routines and tributes to some of the greatest musical artists.



resident of the Boundary Waters. The story reflects the beauty and hardships of Molter's solitary yet satisfying life. From \$25.

Landmark Center
75 5th St. W.
St. Paul
651-292-3225
landmarkcenter.org
Courtroom 317 Con-

certs, all are free and held noon-1 p.m. Thousand Tongues-Music from the Philippines, Thursday, Feb. 13; Donna Stoering and Friends, Thursday, Feb.

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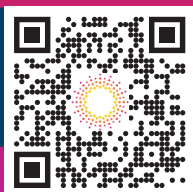


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20; Artaria String Quartet, Thursday, Feb. 27.

Mosaic Festival: Dance and Music of World Cultures, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 16. Experience cultural customs from nations across the globe: music, dance, language, foods, traditional clothing, and arts and crafts. \$6 adults; \$4 kids; free for ages 6 and under.

HORA: Dragobete, 1-3 p.m. each Sunday in February. Learn about the Romanian version of Valentine's Day. Free.

Urban Expedition: Czech Republic and Slovakia, 1-3 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 23. Authentic music, food, dance performances and crafts. Free.

Woodturning demonstration, 1-4 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 16 in the AAW Gallery of Wood Art. Free.

Ordway Center
345 Washington St.
St. Paul
651-224-4222
ordway.org

The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra concerts: Haydn's Fire Symphony, Jan. 31-Feb. 1. Four Spirits with Abel Selaoe, Feb. 14-15. All concerts from \$16.

Minnesota Opera presents "The Snowy Day," Feb. 8-16. A young boy wakes to find that the first snow of winter has fallen overnight—an exciting day of adventure awaits. From \$37.

DRUMLine Live, 7:30 p.m., Friday, Feb. 21. A musical roller coaster full of hip-hop, pop, American soul, gospel, jazz and more

with choreographed routines and tributes to some of the greatest artists of our time, including Prince. From \$34.

Fire Shut Up in My Bones, 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 23. Based on the 2014 memoir by Charles M. Blow, with music by Terence Blanchard, and libretto by Kasi Lemmons. From \$15.

Park Square Theatre
20 W. 7th Place
St. Paul
651-291-7005
parksquaretheatre.org

"The Gin Game," Feb. 5-23. In the quiet confines of a retirement home, two elderly residents form an unexpected bond over games of gin rummy. The play poignantly examines the complexities of aging, loneliness, and the search for human connection, questioning whether life's unpredictable "hands" bring victory or defeat. From \$25.

"Broadway in Love," 7 p.m., Friday, Feb. 14 and 5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 15. A performance of Broadway's greatest loves songs. From \$20.

RiverCentre
175 W. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul
651-265-4800
rivercentre.org

Minnesota Roller Derby, 6 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 8. From \$22.

Minnesota Wedding Show, noon, Sunday, Feb. 23. Connect with wedding professionals.

Science Museum of Minnesota
120 W. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul
651-221-9444
smm.org

"Mental Health: Mind Matters," through Feb. 2. Unravel the layers of mental health, using empathy and understanding to analyze the specific challenges and triumphs associated with mental well-being.

Museum Nights, 5-8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Explore museum galleries, check out special Science Live performances, enjoy food and drink, then catch

an Omnitheater show.

Omnitheater films: "Ancient Caves," through Feb. 14. Join scientists and cave divers to explore vast underground worlds and elaborate rock foundations in search of geologic clues about the planet's climate history.

"Fungi Web of Life," through April 13. The film unravels how plants and animals would not exist without mushrooms, molds, yeasts and toadstools.

"Secrets of the Sea," through April 14. From the smallest krill to the largest whales, explore how ocean

ecosystems depend on biodiversity and a surprising level of animal cooperation.

"Stellar Tours: A Star is Born," Wednesday-Sunday. Follow the life cycle of a star through this live digital telescope show.

Tickets are \$34.95 for adults and \$24.95 for ages 4-17, and include an Omnitheater show.

Xcel Center
199 W. Kellogg Blvd.
St. Paul
651-726-8240
xcelenergycenter.com
Cinch World's Toughest Rodeo, 7:30 p.m., January

31-February 1. The world's toughest cowboys compete in bull riding, saddle bronc riding and bareback riding, and the thrilling winner-takes-all showdown round and women's barrel racing. The rodeo opens at 6 p.m. each night for a pre-show event "down on the dirt," pony rides, the chance to meet the cowboys and more. From \$27.

Tyler, The Creator, Tuesday, Feb. 4. From \$133.

Sebastian Maniscalco, Friday, Feb. 14. From \$51.

Justin Timberlake, Monday, Feb. 24. From \$79.



Our beautiful cemetery is situated on the Pilot Knob plateau above the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. We are proud of our majestic scenery and natural environment that is uninhibited by upright monuments – a stunning park-like setting.

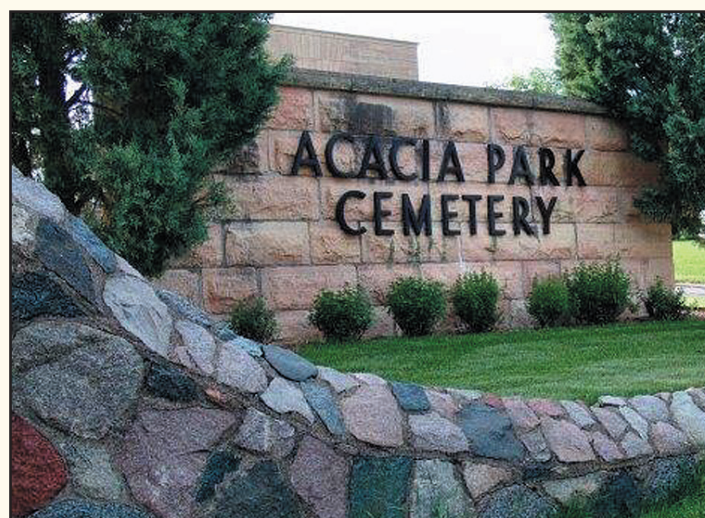
Established in 1925, Acacia Park Cemetery sits 350 feet above the Mississippi River, just south of the Mendota Bridge across from historic Fort Snelling. Pilot Knob was an early 19th Century viewing point for such frontiersmen as Zebulon Pike and Josiah Snelling. Native Americans often insisted that agreements be signed there because it was the site "closer to the heavens." Its majestic aura continues to impress visitors with the same peace that infused the Native Americans many years ago.

Acacia Park offers 21 different sections of property,

each, like the park itself, named after a type of tree. Ash, oak, pine, maple, elm, locust and linden are among the varieties dressing the park's rolling terrain. A stone chapel, built in the 1930s with stone from the old St. Paul courthouse provides an added remnant of a historical era.

Visitors to Acacia Park are greeted by a 40-foot steel bell tower donated to Acacia Park by Eva Hope Miller in memory of her husband Major General Ray S. Miller. The bell tower stands eminently in the main courtyard and its symmetrical grace lends a ceremonial harmony to the memorial grounds.

The Audubon Society recognized Acacia Park for its bird sanctuary, which attracts thousands of birds each year. The cemetery is also home to deer, wild turkeys, fox, and albino squirrels.



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acaciaparkcemetery.org

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Winter Fun inside and out

Tim Spitzack
Editor

One cool thing about our city is that there's always something fun to do – inside and out – even in the heart of winter. We're a hardy bunch and event organizers know a little snow and cold won't keep us from having a good time. Here's what's on tap in the coming weeks.

St. Paul Winter Carnival

The St. Paul Winter Carnival is in full swing and there's still time to enjoy the ice sculptures at Rice Park, snow sculptures and Vulcan Snow Park at the State Fairgrounds, and to witness the Vulcan Victory Torchlight Parade and overthrow of King Boreas. For more information on the following Winter Carnival events, visit wintercarnival.com.

Around the World in a Day Kids & Family Day, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Feb. 1 at the Landmark Center. Entertaining performances by local cultural groups, educational presentations, arts

and crafts, storytelling, and other activities for all ages. Vendors will also be selling their wares and food.

Union Depot's Doggie Depot, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Feb. 1. Includes the crowning of the Canine King & Queen, giveaways, a marketplace, and visits with pet experts. From 2-9 p.m., stop by the Great Northern Ice Bar on the North Plaza at Union Depot.

Vulcan Victory Torchlight Parade, Feb. 1. The parade starts at 5:30 p.m. at Smith Avenue and West Seventh and ends at Rice Park. Following the parade, the 2025 Krewe will gather at the steps of the George Latimer Central Library for the ever-dramatic overthrow of King Boreas. A fireworks show will follow.

Vulcan Victory Dance, 7:30 p.m., Feb. 1 at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront, 11 Kellogg Blvd. E. Rhino will play a wide range of tunes from funk to R&B to retro-pop and current chart-topping singles. For tickets, visit vulcanvictorydance.com.



Minnesota Ice Festival

The Minnesota Ice Festival runs through Feb. 16 at TCO Stadium, Viking Lakes, 2645 Vikings Circle, Eagan. It features a massive 18,000-square-foot ice maze (recently named the world's largest by Guinness World Records), a 44-by-80-foot skating rink, multi-lane ice slide, ice bar, food trucks, outdoor firepits and warming house. The event also features the Carver Cup ice sculpting competition Jan. 30-Feb. 1. Ice sculpting teams from across the country compete to create spectacular works of art and the chance to win a cash prize and the Carver Cup trophy. Festival hours are 4-10 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturdays and 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays. Tickets are \$24.99 for ages

15 and older and \$12.99 for ages 5-14. For more information, visit minnesotaicefestival.com.

MH Frozen Fun Fest

The Mendota Heights Parks and Recreation Department is hosting its annual Frozen Fun Fest February 3-9. Here's the line-up. Some events require registration. For more information or to register, visit mendotaheightsmn.gov/500/Frozen-Fun-Fest.

The **medallion hunt** begins Monday, Feb. 3 and runs through Sunday, Feb. 9, or until the medallion is found. The winner receives a Minnesota-themed gift basket valued at \$200. The medallion will be in a city park and daily clues will be posted at 9 a.m. beginning Feb. 3 on the City's website and at facebook.com/MH-ParksandRec.

Ice Block Party, 5-8 p.m., Friday, Feb. 7 at Friendly Hills Park, 2360 Pueblo Ln. An evening of live music, snowshoeing among luminaries (snowshoes available to use for free), ice skating, hot chocolate, food trucks and more. Music takes place in an enclosed, heated tent. The Teddy Bear Band will perform 5-5:45 p.m. and

the Beatnik Brothers 6:30-8 p.m.

Puzzle competition, 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, Feb. 8, at Somerset Elementary School, 1355 Dodd Rd. Teams and individuals will race to finish a 500-piece puzzle. Kids ages 8-14 will compete to complete a 100-piece puzzle, beginning at 10:45 a.m. Each member of the winning team will receive a puzzle to take home. Free. Registration required.

Learn to Ice Fish, 2-4 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 8 at Roger's Lake Park, 1000 Wagon Wheel Trail. Discover why ice fishing is so popular in Minnesota and learn how to be successful at it. Equipment provided. Free.

Coffee with the Council, 9-10 a.m., Sunday, Feb. 9 at Par 3 Golf Course, 1695 Dodd Rd. Join city council members for a cup of java and conversation.

Coloring contest, Feb. 3-9. Color a wintery masterpiece for a chance to win prizes. There will be two categories: ages 5 and under, and 6-12. Coloring sheets can be picked up at Mendota Heights City Hall, 1101 Victoria Curve, or found online. Drop off completed coloring sheets at City

Hall during normal business hours or after hours in the outdoor utility bill drop box at City Hall.

WSP Winter Fun Fest

The annual Winter Fun Fest in West St. Paul returns 2-5 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 15, at Dodge Nature Center, 1701 Charlton St. Activities include horse-drawn wagon rides, snowshoeing, boot hockey, ice golf, otter sliding, kicksledding and more. Visitors can also join a medallion hunt for the chance to win a prize package, enjoy music and a toasty bonfire, and more. All activities are free. Food and beverages will be available for purchase. For more information, visit dodge-naturecenter.org or call 651-455-4531.

Snowshoe by candlelight

South St. Paul Parks and Recreation is hosting a candlelight snowshoe hike at Kaposia Park at 5 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 5. The trails will be illuminated by candlelight for a serene walk through the woods. Snowshoe rentals will be available for kids and adults, although they are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. If you don't have snowshoes, you can still hike the trails. The event is free. Food trucks will offer hot food and beverages for purchase.

South St. Paul Parks and Recreation is offering cross-country ski lessons 3:30-5 p.m., on Mondays and Wednesdays, Feb. 3-12 at Como Park and Battle Creek Regional Park. Designed for beginners, instruction focuses on fundamental techniques like gliding, balancing and the proper use of ski poles. Skis are provided for kids. \$20.

For more information, visit southstpaul.org or call 651-366-6200.

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{ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES }

Big Brothers Big Sisters is looking for men, especially Latinos, to mentor boys ages 7-12 in St. Paul. To volunteer, call 651-789-2400 or visit www.bigstwincities.org.

Ramsey County Community Human Services has volunteer opportunities for people age 16 and older. For more information, contact 651-266-4090 or visit ramseycounty.us/your-government/volunteer.

Science Museum of Minnesota is seeking volunteers to assist with visitor services and exhibits. Apply at smm.org/volunteer or call 651-221-9453 for more information.

CommonBond Communities seeks volunteers to assist children and teens with their academic skills, homework and discovering post-secondary school and career opportunities. For more information, visit commonbond.org/volunteer or contact volunteerservices@commonbond.org or 651-291-1750.

Minnesota Reading, Math Corps is seeking tutors to serve in St. Paul public schools. For more information or to apply, visit readingandmath.org/locations/minnesota or contact 612-206-3030.

Rebuilding Together Twin Cities is looking for Safe at Home volunteers to provide home safety and accessibility modifications for low-income older adult or disabled homeowners in St. Paul and Dakota County. For more information,



call 651-776-4273, email volunteerservices@rebuildingtogether-twincities.org or visit rtmn.org/get-involved/volunteers/.

Volunteers of America is looking for volunteers age 55 and over to assist children who are struggling with homework and reading. To volunteer or receive more information, contact 952-945-4400 or visit voamnwi.org.

Hospice of the Midwest is seeking caring, responsible volunteers to provide companionship visits to patients throughout the Twin Cities. Also seeking music

providers, veterans, and pet therapy volunteers. Hours are flexible and training is provided. Contact Jen for more information: jennifer.emerson@hospiceofthemidwest.com

Cerenity Senior Care-Humboldt is seeking volunteers to work with seniors in assisted living, memory care, transitional care, and nursing care. To volunteer, contact 651-220-1771, HumboldtVolunteer@bhshealth.org, or visit cerenityseniorcare.org/volunteer.

Neighborhood House in St. Paul is looking for volunteers to assist in the food shelf, with tutoring, youth services and other areas. For more information, call 651-789-2524 or visit neighborhoodhousemn.org/volunteer/.

DARTS, a nonprofit organization serving seniors in Dakota County, offers a variety of volunteer opportunities. To volunteer, contact 651-234-2254, volunteer@darts1.org, or visit dartsconnects.org.

Dodge Nature Center, a nonprofit environmental education center in West St. Paul, is seeking volunteers to assist with community events, land management and environmental education. For more information, call 651-455-4531 or visit dodgenaturecenter.org.

Dakota County offers volunteer positions in community corrections, environmental resources, the Historical Society, library, parks, public health, the sheriff's office and social services. For more information, call 651-438-4435 or visit co.dakota.mn.us and search "volunteer."

Neighbors, Inc., a social service agency serving northern Dakota County, has a number of volunteer opportunities to assist local residents, including work with the food shelf and thrift store. For more information, call 651-455-5000 or visit neighborsmn.org.

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POSTSCRIPT

The car wash dress

My sister took me to task. "You know I was not being mean about your dress, don't you?"

She meant the dress that she had said made me look like a car wash – the part of the car wash where the flappy things slap the car dry. My dress looked a lot like that, especially if I spun around. I thought this was hilarious and mentioned it in a column.

"Of course I knew you weren't being mean!" I told her.

It was not my intention



Carrie Classon
CarrieClasson.com

to be so amusing, wearing the car wash dress. From a certain angle, it looks pretty stylish. It was some designer's idea of a good look, and

because I wear a smaller size, I can usually fit into these ill-conceived but affordable cast-offs I find on the internet. Not all of them work out. But I'm delighted when I can cause some unexpected merriment simply by showing up in an \$11 used dress.

My sister ought to know. She should know that, at 62, I'm not angling for some best-dressed list. I'm all about having fun with clothes, trying weird and different things, and a lot of those things absolutely are not going to work out. That's fine with me. I still have the car wash dress. It's black, so I could wear it to a funeral sometime when I felt a little levity might be welcomed at

the end of the service.

My family has a fine tradition of teasing. I know some people find this hard to believe, and I know some people tease cruelly. That's not what I mean at all. The teasing in my family has always been delivered with a heavy dose of love. Since I was a small child, I've known that the person who got teased was loved and the more people teased, the more love there was.

My dad and his sister were terrible to each other. My father always gave my aunt the meanest birthday cards, until one year she said, "Just once, I'd like a nice birthday card."

The next year, my father went on a mission to find

the most maudlin, absurdly sentimental, "To My Beloved Sister" birthday cards he could find. He found three, doused them in perfume, and presented them to her. (My dad also made her a rather nice set of candleholders in his woodshop that year, as I recall.)

They both laughed so hard they had to wipe away tears. She never asked for another nice card. So when my sister tells me I look like a car wash, it makes my day. I feel seen. I feel loved.

Being able to tell someone they look like a car wash means you know them well. She knows I have an oversized interest in buying dresses – too many dresses

– for cheap on the internet. She knows I'm not terribly self-conscious. (OK, I'm a bit of a ham.) Most of all, she knows that I know she loves me. She has supported me through every crazy and life-disturbing decision and event – career changes, a divorce, and moves across the country. There has never been a moment of my life when I have doubted that my sister would be there for me.

So, she gets to tease me.

I am definitely keeping the car wash dress. And it's not the last crazy dress I will buy. I figure it's my duty to give my sister something new to laugh about.

Till next time.

Viewpoint

'Smoke and Steel'

Prose and photo by Jared Arvin
(Part of the Saints by Night Series)

The city stands in quiet observation, wrapped in the cold stillness of night. Beneath the layers of darkness, St. Paul becomes a landscape of untold stories, moments slipping between dusk and dawn. Smoke and Steel emerges from this nocturnal silence, continuing the Saints by Night series, a reflection of the unseen rhythm that drives the city after hours.

The Robert Street Bridge arcs across the scene like a passage between worlds – its structure an enduring witness. Below, the Mississippi flows in a steady, shadowed current, untouched by the lights and industry along its banks. To the right, train tracks stretch away, fading into the distance like echoes of journeys past. The air is sharp, carrying the cool scent of iron and water, cutting through the stillness with precision.

The night keeps its mysteries hidden. The headlights on Old Shepard Road pierce the darkness, a lone traveler moving through the unknown. It's a moment suspended, caught between motion and memory. A glimpse of lives passing beneath the bridges and along the riverbank, unseen but present.

In the distance, the Wabasha Street Bridge stands tall, a sentinel of steel and stone, watching over the night as smoke rises slowly into the sky. The city breathes deeply, its presence felt in every corner, though its rhythm is soft, almost imperceptible. This is another chapter in the Saints by Night narrative where time moves forward yet the city feels caught in its own quiet pause.

Smoke and Steel captures the essence of the city's unspoken pulse. It's a place where man-made structures and natural forces converge under the cover of night, each element playing its part in the landscape. This is a city that never fully sleeps, its stories lingering in the spaces between steel, stone, water and smoke – waiting for those willing to see.



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Worship Guide

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another.” Hebrews 10: 24-25

DOWNTOWN

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King of France**
506 Cedar St.
651-224-3379
stlouiskingoffrance.org

**Church of the
Assumption**
51 W. Seventh St.
651-224-7536
assumptionsp.org

Central Presbyterian
500 Cedar St.
651-224-4728
centralforgood.org

First Baptist
499 Wacouta St.
651-222-0718
firstbaptiststpaul.org

Church of St. Mary
267 8th St. E., #100
651-222-2619
stmarystpaul.org

WEST SIDE

Cherokee Park United
371 Baker St. W.
651-227-4275
cherokeeparkunited.org

La Puerta Abierta UMC
690 Livingston Ave.
651-558-1896

Our Lady of Guadalupe
401 Concord St.
651-228-0506
www.olgcatholic.org

St. Elizabeth Orthodox
125 Congress St. E.
651-424-0814
seocc.org

St. Matthew Catholic
490 Hall Avenue
651-224-9793
st-matts.org

**St. Paul Mennonite
Fellowship**
371 Baker St. W.
saintpaulmennonite.org

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1400 Robert St. S.
651-457-3373
augustana.com

**Community Christ
the Redeemer**
110 Crusader Ave. W.
651-451-6123
ccredeemer.org

**Crown of Life Lutheran
Church & School**
115 Crusader Ave. W.
651-451-3832
colwsp.org

Faith United Methodist
1530 Oakdale Ave.
651-457-5686
faithumcmn.com

Mizpah River Ministries
1530 Oakdale Ave.
651-399-5783

Restoration Hope Church
121 Butler Ave. W.
(Heritage Middle School)
West St. Paul, 612-254-480
restorationhopechurch.com

Riverview Baptist
14 Moreland Ave. E.
651-457-3831
riverviewbaptist.net

Salem Lutheran
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651-457-9232
saintjameslutheran.com

St. Joseph's Catholic
1154 Seminole Ave.
651-457-2781
churchofstjoseph.org

St. Stephen's Lutheran
1575 Charlton St.
651-457-6541
ststephenswsp.org

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Luther Memorial Church
315 15th Ave. N.
651-451-2400
luther-memorial.com

**St. Augustine's
Catholic Church**
408 3rd St. N.
651-455-1302
holyltrinitysspmn.org

First Presbyterian
535 20th Ave. N.
651-451-6223
fpcssp.org

**Woodbury Lutheran
Wakota Ridge Campus**
255 W. Douglas St.
651-739-5144
woodburylutheran.org

**South St. Paul Hispanic
Seventh-day Adventist**
140 6th Ave. N.
651-455-0777

Grace Lutheran Church
155 8th Ave. S.
651-451-1035
grace-ssp.org

**Holy Trinity
Catholic Church**
Catholic Church
749 6th Ave. S.
651-455-1302
holyltrinitysspmn.org

**Clark Grace
United Church**
779 15th Ave. N.
651-451-7278
clarkgraceucc.org

**St. Sava Serbian
Orthodox church**
357 2nd Ave. S.
651-451-0775
stsavamn.org

**Saint John Vianney
Catholic Church**
789 17th Ave. N.
651-451-1863
info@sjvssp.org

**Sf. Stefan
Romanian
Orthodox Church**
350 5th Ave. N.
651-451-3462
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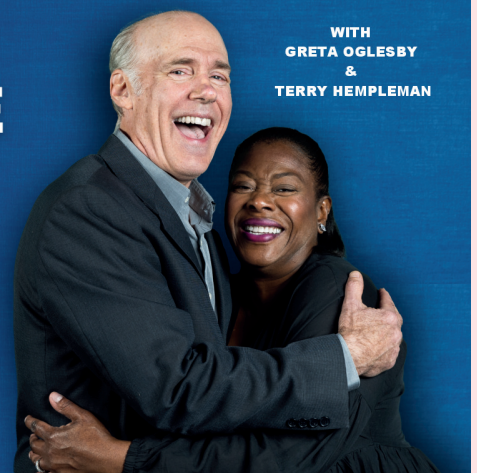
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