

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

November 5, 2023



**Transgender
Remembrance**
S U N D A Y

GOD IS STILL SPEAKING



*NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S
JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!*

Worship Leadership

Preacher: The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Shirley Keith Knox

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore
Choristers' Director: Jonneke A. Dundore
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Organist: Sarah A. Myers
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Jim Pirtle
Greeters: Rebecca Drazba, Chris Grice, Steven Roush, Wendy Hayden
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place:
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Darryl and Winnie Wentz
Counting Team:
Fellowship Time Sponsors: Called to Care

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

*Visit the church website, under the 'Sign Up' menu heading, to help
as a Sunday volunteer or Worship Participant.
We're grateful for your generosity.*

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**626 Williams Grove Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717)766-7931**

saintpaulsucc-mech.org

Office: stpaulstaff@outlook.com

Rev. John: revjohnwd@outlook.com

Rev. Allyssa: allyssaboyer@outlook.com

**ONLINE
GIVING**



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

HOLY COMMUNION
TRANSGENDER REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 5, 2023

Please note: the livestream broadcast begins with the Announcements.

*If you do not wish to appear in the livestream,
it is best to sit in one of the back three pews of the Sanctuary.*

*Please write up any Prayer Requests ahead of time, leave them in the Red Bowl
or give them to the Lead Greeter. They will bring them forward.*

**Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.*

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "He Leadeth Me"

Franklin Ritter

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 18 "Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of all creation, Your wisdom, Your love, and Your mystery are boundless. You have many names, which are beyond all gender expressions. We give You thanks for the gift of diverse gender identity, expression, and sexuality. We acknowledge the times we deny that gift by holding too tightly to expectations of conformity and norms. We have created these divisions and use them against one another. We know this is not Your will or Your way. Help us to act mercifully and show grace to all of Your people, as You have done for us. God of love, You weep with us in our grief and fear. Enfold in Your loving embrace all those in our Trans community lost to death this year. You know their names, Divine Creator, even when they are misnamed or misgendered as a last act of violence and erasure. You see each one as Beloved, and call them by their chosen name. You claim them as Your Children. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We acknowledge the harm, that prejudice and ignorance has knowingly and unknowingly caused. We need help so we might soften hearts, and give wisdom and understanding, that in the sight of God, all are equally beloved simply because of our existence. We still need to be visible examples of open hearts and minds that embrace and support one another, so that all may let their light shine before others by living out their truth. Let us join in the time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and continues to call us to stand with all who are oppressed, particularly those who are threatened with more and more violence.

ALL: Challenge us, O Holy One, to speak out for those who are silenced, to stand with those who are bullied, and to go with those who face danger. May all those in the Trans-Community, and their parents, spouses, friends, loved ones and medical professionals know of our unwavering support. Amen.

If you are able, please rise and greet one another with other signs of Peace.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE GLORIA PATRI (#759 is the tune, but not all the same words)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

*Children are invited to the front at this time.
Everyone who comes forward will be on camera.*

SING THE CHILDREN TO THE FRONT

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world

Shy and Joyful, Bold and Bright

They are precious in his sight

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

THE WORD FOR THE YOUNG

SING THE CHILDREN TO THEIR SEATS

Jesus Loves Me

*Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so
Little ones to him belong. They are weak but He is strong.*

*Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me
Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so*

THE GOSPEL READING

Matthew 23:1-12

THE PSALM READING

Psalms 107:1-7

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING & MESSAGE:

Micah 3:5-12

“God Notes Injustice”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

I In sol - i - tude, in sol - i - tude, I come to God in prayer.

In si - lence and sim - plic - i - ty, my spir - it blos - soms there.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate. Thank you.

THE OFFERTORY “God Has Work for Us to Do”

Miller

Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY

*From all who dwell beneath the skies,
Let the Creator’s praise arise!
Let the Redeemer’s name be sung.
Through every land, by every tongue! Amen.*

*THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

Let Your Word be at work in us, gracious God, and through the offerings we present for Your blessing. We offer here our support for the work of teaching, preaching, and good counsel, our assistance for those who are burdened and hungry and lost, our encouragement for questioners, seekers, and risk-takers intent on leading a life worthy of Your approval. We are all your students. Let us also be Your humble servants, through the offering of our substance and ourselves. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 337 “Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether”

Please note: Our ushers will be passing out the Communion Elements on trays to each individual or family unit. You do not need to pass the plates down.

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

All: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

We gather both in person and in Spirit. Greeters will pass out bread and gluten-free crackers, and then red wine and white grape juice. They will bring the trays to you.

For those of you joining us via livestream, we hope you have some bread and wine or juice of your choice before you. We trust that God is powerful enough to extend God's Blessing upon these Communion elements, even as we and they are scattered in geographic space.

Please hold the elements until all have been served; we will eat and then drink them together. All are welcome to participate. Thank you.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Holy God, we give You thanks for the miracle and wonder of this meal. We give You thanks for your coming to us in the person of Jesus, and for Jesus' willingness to offer his whole self for our benefit. We can see how we can best live our lives. We can believe all "deaths," those losses, endings, and struggles in this life, and the ones at the end of our physical lives, are not the final word. We can trust that Your Spirit is within all of us, and always will be. May the gifts of this table always remind us of the gifts You have given us all. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 531 "God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"

*THE BIDDING TO MISSION

We hold in love and prayer all Transgender people, so many of whom live under the weight of violence, fear, and intolerance. We hold in love and prayer all the ways that Transgender people have survived and thrived in a hostile world. We hold in love and prayer all who recognize the significance of gender justice for all people.

We who believe in freedom will not rest until it comes. We pray for the dawn of a new day when the very humanity of Trans people is no longer called into question or ignored. We pray that physical, emotional, and spiritual violence will come to an end. We pray that a spirit of compassion and care will fill us to overflowing, that we may have the capacity to listen, learn, and grow not only in our awareness but also in our willingness to act. We pray for teachers, spiritual leaders, social workers, lawyers, and all people who heed the

call to support Trans-liberation, Trans-leadership, and Trans-visibility. May they ultimately lean into the Light of truth and justice, offering hope to Trans and gender nonconforming youth and adults.

On this day, we commit and recommit to creating a world where people of all genders know peace, love, and justice. We commit and recommit to living lives of compassion and care for all of humanity. We commit and recommit to the healing work of relationship-building that will help every person know, no matter their gender or sexuality, that they are loved and valued.

Blessed be and Amen.

***THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER**

One: Lead us, O God.

All: **Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.**

Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.

***THE BENEDICTION**

*** THE THREE-FOLD AMEN**

Please note: the livestream continues until the end of the Postlude.

Please know you are free to leave following the Three-fold Amen and exit to the Narthex to speak with one another. You may be visible and audible on the livestream as you exit early. If you choose to remain, please stay seated and listen quietly to the Postlude.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “Paeon of Triumph”

Lani Smith

References:

The unison Prayer of Invocation is made up from parts of Jenn Luong’s A Prayer for the Trans Day of Remembrance, Augsburg University, 2020, and Leo Bancroft’s A Prayer for Transgender Day of Remembrance, Reconciling Works, 2016.

The Call to Confession is made up from a part of Jenn Luong’s A Prayer for the Trans Day of Remembrance, Augsburg University, 2020.

The Assurance of Forgiveness includes a part of Leo Bancroft’s A Prayer for Transgender Day of Remembrance, Reconciling Works, 2016.

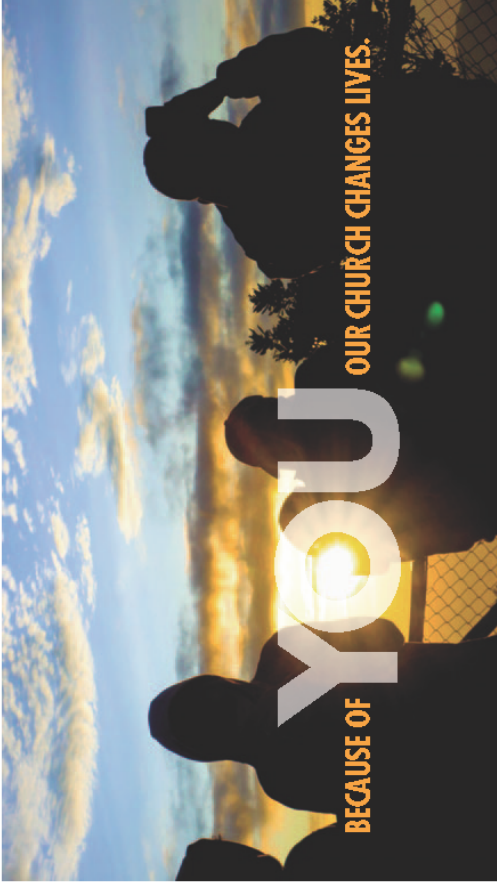
The unison Bidding to Mission is by The Transforming Hearts Collective, Transgender Remembrance Prayer.

The Prayer of Dedication is from “Taught by Love” by Lavon Bayler, 1998, United Church Press.

The World Peace Prayer is a paraphrase of a verse from the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, also prayed daily by Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns.

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by Fenton Fox, “In honor of Rick and my 14th Wedding Anniversary.”



the ministry of women, when our very bodies, aren't safe at church, the streets or in our own country. God calls two women to act together through faithful stewardship of what they had and who they were. This act of stewardship in the face of an extraction economy and empire, they become midwives to liberation.

"The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Pua, 'When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.' The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live." (Exodus 1: 15-17).

Stewardship for Liberation

By **Rev. Dr. Dietra Wise Baker**

There is a new Pharaoh running the empire, one that does not know Joseph (Exodus 1). The exodus story begins by reciting the names of descendants of Joseph in Egypt. Joseph and all his brothers have died, but their children and grandchildren have grown in number and strength. The growth has not led to any economic security but has made the Israelites vulnerable to oppression, extraction, and exploitation.

It's in this biblical context that God calls a pair of midwives into a place where oppression is rampant. God calls them via their vocation as midwives. God calls us first to be stewards of who we are, not just we have. The midwives teach us that faithful stewardship has a nature: we offer what we have in ways that resist oppression and build community. Stewardship is an act of resistance, to resist a narrative that says we are not enough, that we don't have enough. Stewardship which centers people who appear to have little or no power to change things. In witnessing the midwives, they give us renewed energy to remember our call: when

Shiphrah and Pua resist and refuse to obey the decree of the King in the inaugural act of liberation. Notice these two midwives act first, God acts later. This is critical insight on stewardship. Stewardship is the place we are called to partner with God. Is it possible that God needs something to work with, that God is not a magician, but needs choices, risks, possibilities, for our communities to do something concrete, to act decisively in the offering of our gifts, to be stewards, to create a new path of liberation!

A new threat to liberation meets us in our time and place, and therefore a renewed call of stewardship. Yes, celebrate the liberative work we've already done in partnership with God and community. The victories and battles already won. The Lord God promises us that together as indispensable stewards of liberation, that indeed we are midwifing liberation. So go midwife liberation in the church, in the community with the people of God everywhere.

