



St. Paul's United Church of Christ
626 Williams Grove Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Phone: 717-766-7931

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AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.

The Epistle

is a monthly publication of St. Paul's UCC.

Comments, suggestions, and submissions are welcome!

Please wear a mask inside if you wish.

Live stream services on St. Paul's Facebook Page & YouTube Channel.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STAFF

Pastor.....The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
Associate Pastor..... The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Administrative Assistant.....Renee E. Durbin
Director of Music.....Eric R. Dundore
Chorister' Director.....Jonneke A. Dundore
Assistant Music Director.....Mark A Dundore
Organist.....Sarah A Myers
Assistant Organist.....Patrice G. Miller
Audio & Video.....Jeffrey A. Dundore
Sexton.....Michael W. Hatz
Consistory President.....Sherry Spencer
Pastor Emeritus.....The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold
Ministers.....The Entire Congregation of St. Paul's

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00-4:00 ♦ Office email: stpaulstaff@outlook.com

Phone: 717-766-7931

Rev. John's email: revjohnwd@outlook.com

Rev. Allyssa's email: allyssaboyer@outlook.com

Eric's email: ericdundore@outlook.com

Web Address: www.saintpaulsucc-mech.org

FROM THE PASTOR

Two poems by Howard Thurman found in the book
The Mood of Christmas: And Other Celebrations,
by Howard Thurman, 1973, 1985, Friends Untied Press; pages 19 and 27.

I Will Light Candles This Christmas

Candles of joy, despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage for fears ever present,
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all the year long.

The Growing Edge

All around us worlds are dying and new worlds are being born;
All around us life is dying and life is being born:
The fruit ripens on the tree;
The roots are silently at work in the darkness of the earth
Against the time when there shall be new leaves, fresh blossoms,
green fruit.
Such is the growing edge!
It is the extra breath from the exhausted lung,
The one more thing to try when all else has failed,
The upward reach of life when weariness closes in upon all endeavor.
This is the basis of hope in moments of despair,
The incentive to carry on when times are out of joint
And men have lost their reason; the source of confidence
When worlds crash and dreams whiten into ash.
The birth of a child—life's most dramatic answer to death—
This is the Growing Edge incarnate,
Look well to the growing edge!

Two poems I am sharing with our Poetry as Prayer group and you.
Have a Peaceful and Blessed Christmas and Christmas Season.
Peace, Rev. John

Acronyms and Shorthand in Our Faith Community

We have many ministries at St. Paul's UCC and in the wider church, which means we often use shortcuts in our communication. But we realize not everyone knows what all these letters and words mean. So, here's a quick glossary of frequently used shorthand and acronyms found at St. Paul's and beyond.

Bazaar: The Bazaar is our largest annual church fundraiser. Held on the first Friday of every October, it includes the sale of homemade chicken pot pie, crafts, baked goods, and flea market items.

Called to Care: The Called to Care team is a care-giving ministry. After training, team members are equipped to do a wide range of tasks, including visiting people in hospitals, homes, and care facilities, preparing and delivering meals, providing transportation for medical appointments, and checking-in and offering prayers for those who need support.

CE: Christian Education. The CE Council organizes and supports all the faith formation and educational programs and activities offered by St. Paul's, including Sunday school, book studies, and confirmation classes.

COM: Committee on Ministry. The COM is the group of clergy and lay people responsible for authorizing and overseeing ministry, and for the care and wellbeing of the churches and clergy, within the Mercersburg Association (a regional division of the United Church of Christ).

Dreams and Visions: The name for our most recent capital campaign.

E&R: Evangelical and Reformed Church. The Evangelical and Reformed Church was a Protestant Christian denomination. In 1957, The Evangelical and Reformed Church merged with the majority of the Congregational Christian Churches to form the United Church of Christ. Prior to the formation of the United Church of Christ, St. Paul's was an Evangelical and Reformed Church.

GTS: Gather the Spirit, short for *Gather the Spirit for Justice*, a non-profit organization serving the

community of Allison Hill in Harrisburg.

New Hope: short for *New Hope Ministries*, a Christian social service agency serving low-income families in Central Pennsylvania.

ONA: Open & Affirming. ONA is the United Church of Christ's designation for congregations and other bodies in the UCC that make a public covenant of welcome and affirmation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, races, languages, ages, physical or mental abilities, and economic statuses into the full life, ministry, and sacraments of the church.

PRISM: People Rallying In Singles Ministry. PRISM is a group of single people who meet for fellowship.

QBS: Queer Bible Study. QBS is a bible study open to all people (of any sexual orientation or gender) who are interested in exploring scripture through a Queer lens.

Rally Day: Rally Day is the day in late summer/early autumn when Sunday school begins after summer break; it is also the day when our worship time shifts from 9:15 AM to 10:30 AM.

Sarah Todd and Thornwald: Sarah A. Todd Memorial Home and Thornwald Home are both non-profit retirement living communities in Carlisle, PA, operated by United Church of Christ Homes.

SPARCC: St. Paul's Against Racism, Creating Change. SPARCC is a group of members from our congregation who meet monthly for study, discussion, and antiracist direct action in our community.

SPOM: St. Paul's On a Mission. SPOM is a group of members from our congregation who participate in fundraising for "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer," a national network of events to support people living with breast cancer and cancer research.

SPOOF: St. Paul's On Our Feet. SPOOF is a group of members from our congregation who participate in fellowship outdoors, especially hiking together.

SPOT: St. Paul's On Tour. SPOT is a group of members from our congregation who travel together on church-related trips. The first trip SPOT took was a journey to Germany in the

1990's to visit with ministry partners in former East Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

UCC: United Church of Christ. Our denomination was formed in 1957 with the union of the Evangelical & Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches. These denominations were themselves the result of earlier unions, with roots in the Congregational churches of New England, the German Reformed Church, the Christian Churches that arose on the American frontier at the turn of the 19th century, and the German Evangelical Synod.

VBS: Vacation Bible School. A four-day event of faith-based learning and activities for children during summer.



GET TO KNOW ST. PAUL'S CONSISTORY!

In a continuing effort to get to know your Consistory, please let me introduce:

Jim Pirtle

I came to St. Paul's over 20 years ago when Kim and I were looking for a Church in which to raise our then pre-school aged kids.



Everyone at St. Paul's was very welcoming and Kim and I and the kids really found a home. I like working with the bazaar committee because the committee is made up of such fun people and the Bazaar is a super fun event. Being part of consistory has helped me learn a lot about the workings of the church and how much St Paul's does in our community.

Term Started: 2022

Term Ending: 2025

Committee Liaison to: Bazaar Committee

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

01/01 Sarah Myers	01/16 Jeanette Smith
Erika Obrock	01/19 Bonnie Plymette
01/02 Deborah Cashman	01/20 Ryan Miller
01/03 Don Wood	Shirley Grammer
01/06 Shannon Sweeney	01/22 Patrice Miller
01/07 Amanda Endy	Paula Boyer
Lori Obrock	01/25 Marshall Bender
Katherine Royer	Matthew Miller
01/09 Carol Rhoads	01/30 Betracy Nye
01/12 Andrew Hall	David Bensel
01/16 Diane Richenbacher	Rhoda Rupp
	01/31 Mason Elliott

ANNIVERSARIES

01/08 Debra & Getachew Kassahun
01/20 Jim & Amy Paulus
01/22 David & Lois Ritter

Church Calendar - The most up to date calendar is on the Church website. Help us keep it current by scheduling your events at the Church thru the Office at stpaulstaff@outlook.com or 717-766-7931.
Thank you

Dear St. Paul's Family:

Thank you so much for the prayers, cards of encouragement, and the gorgeous altar flowers! I was so surprised when Martha Keith showed up at our door shortly after we had just live-streamed Allyssa's wonderful, heart-warming ordination ceremony. We felt like we were part of the ceremony as Dale and I kept remarking about how great it was to see so many of our St. Paul's family in attendance. I had remarked a couple of times about how beautiful the altar flowers were, and then our dear Martha showed up carrying one of the arrangements!

As to my current health issues, I will be seeing a new specialist this week and hope to get some answers. It is frustrating, as most of you are well aware, to be in the dark concerning medical results.

It is so great to be part of this faith community. Praying and hoping for the time I am well enough to attend in person again. In the meantime, I will see you on the Internet!

Thanks again,

Anna Burns

Dear St. Paul's Family,

Thank you so much for the beautiful altar flowers we received in honor of our 50th wedding anniversary. And, thanks to all who sent us anniversary cards. Each and every one is special. You certainly surprised us! We are so blessed, and our hearts are full.

Love, George and Betsy Bingaman

Dear St. Paul's,

The altar flowers that Martha delivered on Sunday are beautiful. What a nice surprise! We weren't sure why we were receiving the flowers, but we were touched that they were to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. We are so blessed to be a part of St. Paul's congregation for over 45 years. Thank you so much!

Love, Bill and Sue Mullin

Spotlight on Sacred Art

Welcome to a new feature in our monthly epistle. Here we'll highlight symbols, emblems, and other aspects of our church's art and architecture, explain their meaning, and reveal a little about their history. This month, our spotlight is on **symbols of baptism**.

Each year, Christian churches around the world celebrate the Baptism of Christ in January. In Western Christian traditions, the Baptism of Christ is celebrated on the first Sunday following Epiphany (Epiphany is the first day after the 12 days of Christmas; celebrated on January 6th every year). This holiday commemorates the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptizer.

A person is incorporated into the universal church, the Body of Christ, through the sacrament of baptism. In the United Church of Christ people are baptized either as babies, children, or adults. Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit is the mark of their acceptance into the care of Christ's church, and the beginning of new growth into full Christian faith and life.



Faceted glass window symbolizing John the Baptizer: a figure depicted with a scallop shell as head covering, and water as a cloak.

It is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other, and with the church of every time and place. As a sacrament, baptism holds an important place in the life of the church, and it is represented through several symbols in our church's artwork.

Naturally, water is a major symbol of baptism. The Holy Spirit, often represented as a descending dove, is also an essential element of baptism. Additionally, seashells (specifically scallops) are symbols of baptism. The symbol of the seashell has been associated with baptism since the first centuries CE; there are paintings on the walls of catacombs which depict people being baptized with water poured from a scallop shell. Because of its connection with baptism, the shell is also a symbol for John the Baptizer, as depicted in one of our faceted glass windows.



St. Paul's UCC's baptismal banner.

Are you curious to learn more about a particular symbol, artwork, or other feature? Let us know by contacting Pastor Allyssa or Rev. Anna Thompson. We would love to hear from you!



Addie (Stork-Whitson); Kevin & Karen Allison; Ann; Barb; Barb Bell; Marshall Bender; Cindy & Dick Bensel; Beverly (Hayden); Bill & Bob (Gabriel); Barbara Blust; Melba Bomberger; Brendan and Family (Richey); Brian (Shearer); Jenny & Erica Budd (Lingenfelter); Anna & Dale Burns; Nancy Cabrera (Runkle); Jeff Carlson (P. Miller); Cheryl (Freeman); Alyssa Claar (A. Thompson); Pat Cleland; Mary Clark Coleman (Riesmeyer); Heather Connelly (Bomberger); John & Sheri Conner (Layne); Donna D'Agostino; Rita Davidson (Plymette); Evelyn Diorio; Dotty (Richey); Gail Dougherty (Ritter); Allen Dreibelbis ; Nancy Dreibelbis; Richard Ecks (Plymette); Harry Felton (Sponsler);

Bob & Eve Fenner; Jerry Foulke & Lynn Carson; Fenton Fox & Rick Holtzapple; Diane Freeman; Steven Freeman; Ron Gabriel; Jack and Jean Gatesman (Richey); Bill Gladstone (Aumiller); Richard Gordon; Floyd Gouse; Shirley Grammer; Harriet & Mark Grimm; Shirley Grove; Dr. Mark Hagenbuch (Bomberger); Jane Hall; Mike Hatz; Noah Helwig (Trout); Jim and Leslie Hoehn; Brenda Hoffer (Stork-Whitson); Beth Hough; Michele Hughes (Murphy); Ingrid (Richey); Janie (Biss); Dan & Will Jones; Josh (Ritter); Julia (Fox/Holtzapple); Elaine Kansy (Hoehn); Kathy (Simpson); Martha & Gene Keith; Stephen Keith; Rev. Dr. Chris Kennedy (Ward-Diorio); Jesse King; Dave Kirkwood; Glenn Kline; Sandy Kline; Deb Korhut; Kristine and Family (Ward-Diorio); Audra Kucharick (Aumiller); Jean & John Layne; Debbie Lever (A. Thompson); Larry Linder (Stork-Whitson/Williams); Liam (Simpson); Lori (Murphy); Luca; Taran M. (Taylor); Manny (Sharp); Marie (Murphy); Michael & Ernie (Richey); Michelle & Family (Mihmet); Charles Miller (Lloyd and Matthew's dad); Linda Miller; Sue & Dayne Miller; Tasha Misner (Trout); Ernie Moyer; Nicolas Murillo (McFarland), Randy, Dar & Sarah Murphy; Beth Myers (Richey); Gene & Ruth Ellen Myers (Boyer); Susan Myers (A. Thompson); Nyugen, Thu (P. Boyer); Ryan Onufer & family (Grice); Jim & Mary P. (Rhoads); Paula Padget (P. Miller); Panker Family (Richey); Eric Potts (A. Boyer); Anne Rankin; Richard Reba (Richenbacher); Robert Reiner (Bender); Carol Rhoads; Jason & Rachelle Rhoads; Wes Rhoads & Family; Nancy, Tom & Dan Richey; Monisha Ridley; Franklin, Andrew, Levi Roth; Rhoda & Ned Rupp; Betsy Rushong; Sam (Freeman); Jane & Tom Scott & Family; Scott & Tracey (Davinroy); John Shandra; Sharon and Family (Lingenfelter); Sherry (Short); Shondra; Corky Short & Candy LaRue; Siemons Family (Wood); James Sowell (Sandy Kline); Barbara Sterner; Dory Szeles (Sterner); Wendi Taylor; April Thomas (Bomberger); Cathy Thomas; Tracy Thrush Family; Tiberius (A. Thompson); Kathy (Wolford Witmer) Toth; Shannon & Phoenix Trout; Bill Utley (Boyer); Rosalie Utley (Boyer); Vickie (S. Miller); Suzy Weeks (Richey); Jean and David Weiss; Leita Wentz; Geri Williams (A. Thompson); Ryan Wilson (Bomberger); Chelsey Wirth; Fran Wolford; Mitchell Worley (Jones); Suzanne Worley (Jones); Kevin Young (A. Thompson); Russell Young (Rushong); Zachary (Taylor).

FEBRUARY EPISTLE SUBMISSION DEADLINE:

Friday, January 20, 2022.

St. Pauls UCC Worship Leaders January 2023

TimeToSignUp.com - Online Sign Up Sheets

Sunday, January 1, 2023 - Christmas Carol Sing Service - 10:30 AM	Sunday, January 8, 2023 10:30 AM	Sunday, January 15, 2023 10:30 AM	Sunday, January 22, 2023 10:30 AM	Sunday, January 29, 2023 10:30 AM
Acolyte	Acolyte	Acolyte	Acolyte	Acolyte
Lector Mary Runkle	Lector Eric Dundore	Lector Paula Boyer	Lector Dennis Plymette	Lector
Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table Steve Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table - Consistor	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table Joan Moyer	Worship Welcome Team Member - Common's Table
Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door	Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door Consistory	Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door	Worship Welcome Team Member - Electronic Door	Worship Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door
Worship Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door	Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door Consistory Steve Roush	Worship Welcome Team Member Sanctuary Exterior Door	Worship Welcome Team Member - Sanctuary Exterior Door	Worship Welcome Team Member - Exterior Door
Altar Flower Delivery Mary Runkle	Welcome Team Member - Consistory Wendy Hayden	Altar Flower Delivery Jill Morell	Altar Flower Delivery Joan Moyer	Altar Flower Delivery Lois and Dave Ritter
Nursery Attendant	Welcome Team Member - Consistory	Nursery Attendant	Nursery Attendant	Nursery Attendant
Nursery Attendant	Welcome Team Member - Consistory	Nursery Attendant	Nursery Attendant	Nursery Attendant
Counting Team Member Steve Roush	Altar Flower Delivery Jonneke Dundore	Counting Team Member	Counting Team Member Dennis Plymette	Counting Team Member
Counting Team Member Mary Runkle	Nursery Attendant	Counting Team Member	Counting Team Member	Counting Team Member
	Nursery Attendant			
	Counting Team Member Joan Moyer			
	Counting Team Member			

HOLIDAY OFFICE SCHEDULE

The church office will be closed Monday, December 26th and Tuesday, December 27th. Along with Monday, January 2nd. Feel free to leave us a message and we will get in touch with you when the office opens.

Events & Announcements

PRISM

All singles are invited to attend our potluck lunch after church on January 8th. We will be gathering in the fellowship hall after burning of the greens. Please bring a favorite dish to share. We look forward to spending time with you. Questions, contact Carol Sizemore, 717-858-3105

CONTRIBUTIONS for 2022 must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2022. Questions on your 2022 contributions can be directed to Renee in the Church Office. Monies received after the start of 2023 will be booked for 2023.

CALLED TO CARE

Called to Care training to begin on January 17th, 2023. Please contact Martha Keith if you are considering joining this important ministry at St. Paul's.

UNDECORATING THE SANCTUARY

Undecorating the sanctuary will take place on Saturday, January 14th starting at 8:00AM. Come when you can, leave when you must! See Jonneke Dundore with questions.

'MITTEN TREE'

The 'Mitten Tree' is now a 'Mitten Bin' in order to not crowd our Common area. We

are placing 2 bins marked for winter mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and warm socks. We will be collecting them throughout Advent. Items will then be taken to New Hope Ministries for distribution. January 14th is the deadline to contribute.

EPIPHANY TREE

January 8, 2023 — The "Burning of the Greens" is a familiar holiday event at St. Paul's. But this year, to be better stewards of the environment, instead of burning our evergreen tree, we are placing it in our columbarium garden and decorating it with handmade edible ornaments for our bird and squirrel neighbors. First, join us in Fellowship Hall during the Sunday school hour, 9:15-10:15 AM, to help make the edible ornaments. Then, join us after the 10:30 AM worship service to bless the Epiphany Tree and celebrate the light of Christ coming into the world. Thank you for helping us start a new Epiphany tradition at St. Paul's!

QUEER BIBLE STUDY

Don't let the 'Q' word scare you, Queer Bible Study is open to all people who wish to go deeper into scripture. You are invited to join us as we explore scripture in relation to sexuality and gender. We welcome older teenagers and adults of every gender and

sexual orientation. We meet on select Tuesdays from 6:30-8:00 PM. Our upcoming meetings are January 24 and January 31. For more information, contact Rev. Allyssa or call the church office. We would love for you to join us!

ALTAR FLOWER SPONSORSHIP FOR 2023 IS NOW OPEN.

It will cost \$30 to sponsor the flowers in 2022. You may go on the church website, under the heading, "Sign Up" to sign up.

CHILD SPONSORSHIP FOR 2023 IS NOW OPEN.

It will cost \$30/MONTH to sponsor a child in 2023. You may go on the church website, under the heading, "Sign Up" to sign up and for more information.

SPOOF

Join St Paul's On Our Feet (SPOOF) to end the year with a hike! We'll be hiking Saturday, December 31st (weather permitting). All are welcome to join us! We

will be hiking to the Cumberland Valley Overlook, from Miller's Gap Rd. We'll also stop at the Darlington Shelter, on the Appalachian Trail. This is a moderately difficult loop hike, 4 miles, with 550 feet of elevation gain. We will meet at the church at 9:00, or you can join us directly at the parking area at the summit of Miller's Gap Rd. It is 9 miles from the church to the parking area. Either way, boots will hit the trail at 9:30am.

Bring: Hiking shoes or boots, water.

Questions: Contact Jenn Martek

THANKS TO ALL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

St. Paul's was able to make the following donations in 2022

Global Ministries Child Sponsorship Program – sponsored 5 children.

The United Church of Christ Four Special Mission Offerings:

One Great Hour of Sharing - \$ 1,445.00



Happy
New Year!

**... look, new things
have come into being!**

2 Corinthians 5:17, NRSV

Neighbors in Need - \$ 660.00
Strengthen the Church - \$ 335.00
The Christmas Fund - \$ 300.00

Annual Benevolences:

Our Churches Wider Mission - \$16,440.00
UCC Homes - \$ 4,910.00
Mercersburg Assn. - \$ 1,840.00
Christian Churches United - \$ 625.00
Gather the Spirit for Justice - \$300.00
Hoffman Homes for Youth - \$ 500.00
Lancaster Seminary - \$ 625.00
Mechanicsburg MOW - \$ 600.00
New Hope Ministries - \$ 700.00
UCC ONA Coalition - \$ 250.00
Mechanicsburg Fire Dept. - \$ 200.00
Upper Allen Fire Dept. - \$ 200.00

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 15th, following the worship service.



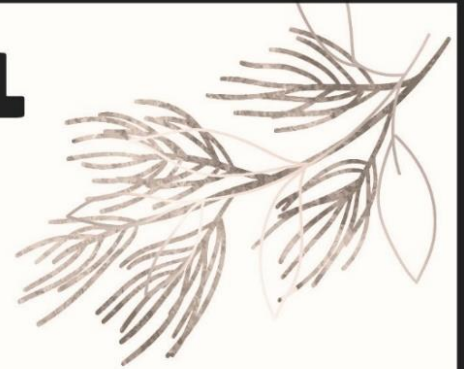
50 Year Members:

Marshall Bender, Shirley Grammar, Sandra Heckman, Craig Hershey, Albert Huebner,

Jacquelyn Kreitzer, Raymond Krouch, Dayne Miller, Joanne Miller, Dorothy Miller, Thomas Milletics, Franklin Roth, Ned & Rhoda Rupp, Carolyn Rutherford, Patricia Scott, Donna Sponsler, Anna Thompson, Susan Thorn, Barbara Westhafer, and Don Wood.

ST. PAUL'S ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL DINNER!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15TH FOLLOWING THE 10:30 SERVICE & ANNUAL MEETING



- Join us in Fellowship Hall for our Annual Congregational Dinner of Pork & Sauerkraut.
- We will be honoring our members with 50 or more years.
- To help cover the cost of the meal, there will be a charge of \$9.00 for ages 13 & up, \$5.00 for ages 5 – 12, ages 4 and under are free.
- Sign-up sheets will be in the Common Area. Also sign up sheets will be available for dessert donations and helpers. All sign up sheets will be online as well.