



# THE MESSENGER

OUR MISSION IS TO GROW IN FAITH, TO WORSHIP GOD, TO SERVE OTHERS, AND TO WELCOME ALL.



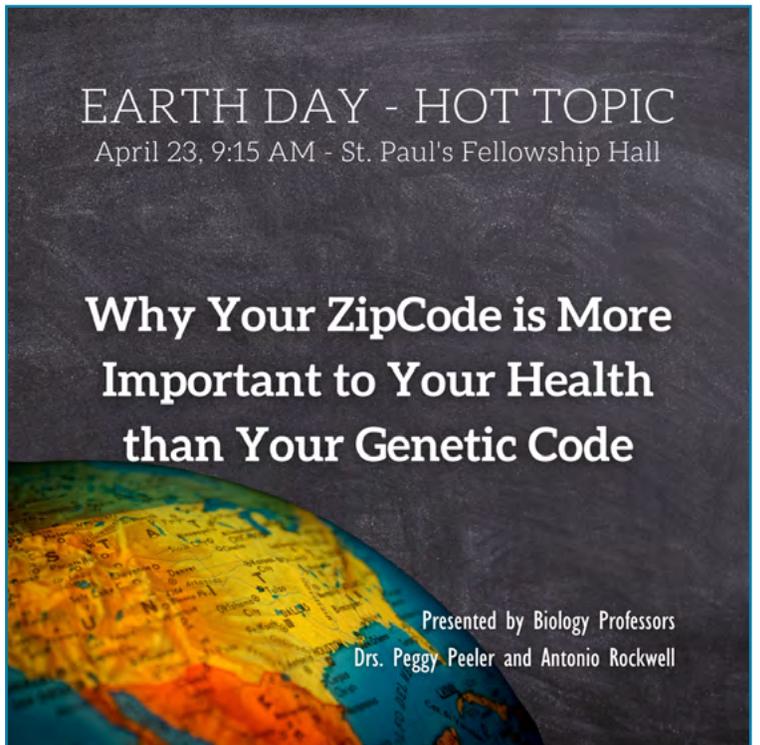
**7** CELEBRATE EASTER WITH US!

April 9 at 6:30 a.m. Sunrise with Easter Fire and 10:30 a.m. Celebration Service

**Heart of the Matter**



**VISIONING**  
APRIL 11 AT 7 PM



**EARTH DAY - HOT TOPIC**  
April 23, 9:15 AM - St. Paul's Fellowship Hall

**Why Your ZipCode is More Important to Your Health than Your Genetic Code**

Presented by Biology Professors  
Drs. Peggy Peeler and Antonio Rockwell



## WE EXPERIENCE EASTER BY FACING OUR LOSSES

I've been your pastor for 16 years. I'm excited and feel spirit energy for the next 16 years. We are such a vibrant church, touching lives on a daily basis. And we have great potential when we stretch and lean into God's vision for us! When we are in it with heart, mind, and soul!

At the same time, I'm grieving. Every funeral I officiate reminds me of how transitory our lives are. The most dear and precious generation, pillars of the church, are aging and have stepped back. I miss many of them. They are dear and close to my heart! Some of our beloved traditions, like the turkey supper, the banquets, the rummage sale, the Mixed Adult Sunday school class, the Kitchen Committee have faded away.

Just like at a funeral, I feel both deep gratitude for the love, the blessings, and the legacy of the departed and the grief over the loss. Grieving is an expression

of love. It is so hard, because you love so much!

Here is the Gospel Message! We can not have resurrection without grieving the loss. We can not rise with Jesus without feeling our hearts break over what's gone. There is no Easter without Good Friday. The cross, the loss, the giving are pre-conditions of rising with Jesus.

Remember Mary looking for Jesus in the garden. She is tearing up, asking the gardener where he laid the body. Remember Jesus' friends walking to Emmaus, sharing with the stranger how their hopes and dreams were crushed when Jesus died. Jesus' closest friends fled the scene - they were scared for their lives.

Jesus meets them and us in our grieving. Jesus meets us in our struggles. Jesus comes to us when we are shackled

by fear. We can not rise with Jesus without the dark and painful experiences. We need to feel the death and grieve our losses in order to rise with Jesus.

That's what Easter is about. We rise, we celebrate, we feel our hearts wonderfully lifted. This Easter miracle happens when we face our losses, our fears, and our darkness. It's not the absence of grief, but grief transformed into celebration!

Join us in some of the wonderful opportunities outlined in this newsletter to rise with Jesus, to feel Christ's resurrection energy!

With joy filled Easter greetings,

*Pastor Dietmar*



### MEET & EAT - MARCH 26 AND APRIL 30 AFTER WORSHIP

We invite you to join us for lunch and sharing immediately after our worship service on March 26 and April 30 in the fellowship hall. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better and to connect with one another more deeply. We are planning for a light lunch with some crockpot meals, salad, sandwiches, pizza and/or the like. Invite someone to join you for the "Meet and Eat" lunch.

# FROM TORRI, OUR YOUTH LEADER



## KIDS NIGHT OUT

The March Kids Night Out was a great success - many thanks to Becky Phillips for helping! The April KNO will be on Saturday, April 8 from 5:30 - 7:30, and we will be celebrating Easter! Please sign up [here](#) by Friday, April 7. Hope to see you there!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School continues to meet after the Children's Message each week. We are exploring the events of Holy Week leading up to Easter Sunday. Please note - we will **not** meet on Easter (April 9) but there will be activity bags for during church and an egg hunt right after!



## TEEN GROUP

We are changing our format for Teen Group in hopes that more people will be able to participate. On March 26, we will attend the first "Meet and Eat" gathering and then head down to Lewisburg to play with the cats at The Scratching Post. Then we will plan some future activities while enjoying some frozen yogurt at Sweet Frogs. Please sign up for "Meet and Eat" and Teen Group [here](#) if you are able to attend.



# APRIL

## BIRTHDAYS



- 4/01 Wyatt L. Beaver
- 4/02 Cindy Frymoyer
- 4/05 Ellen Berger
- 4/06 Maggie Frymoyer
- 4/07 Jane Berger
- 4/08 Owen Feiler
- 4/09 Dakota Namminga  
Jackie Naugle
- 4/10 David Lauer, Sr.
- 4/11 Meghan Hawk
- 4/12 Sarah Reed  
Larry Smith
- 4/13 Charles Klingler
- 4/14 Jessica Smith  
Valerie Vankirk
- 4/16 Vivian Beaver
- 4/17 Don Groner  
Sharon Womer
- 4/19 Eric Dahlmann  
Shannon Hermann  
Joe Williams
- 4/21 Emma Herrold  
James Smith, Jr.
- 4/23 Jim Taylor
- 4/24 Jason Martello  
Jack Riegel  
Andrew Womer
- 4/25 Lauren Imhoof
- 4/27 Isaiah Gruenberg
- 4/28 Barbara Lewis
- 4/29 Joseph "Joe" Erdley
- 4/30 Brian Derr  
Sarah Garbo



## ANNIVERSARIES

- 4/21 Ann & Don Groner
- 4/29 Beverly & Steve Sees

# PRAYER LIST

Jill & Derrick Adair & Family  
 Kelly & Daniel Adair  
 Ben Gautsch  
 Hilda Hahn  
 Brenda and Bill Hockenbrock  
 Jack & Antoinette Horan  
 The Family of Art Lloyd  
 The Family of Kathie Mehlenbacher  
 Parent & Son  
 Jack & Janet Riegel  
 Mercedes Saulsbury  
 Buddy & Lela Strawser

The Stroman Family  
 Bahram Yazeshni  
 All who keep working in critical situations, especially the health care workers  
 All who are grieving  
 Those in leadership positions  
 Our country - for peace, respect, understanding  
 Those who are dear and close to our hearts and those not named above  
 The people of Ukraine and all those suffering from the raging war

# THANK YOU NOTES

### Thank you from Ellen Miller

Dear Church Family, To all of you who have reached out to me following knee surgery, I thank you so much!! We hu-

mans are lucky with our bodies that heal so fast!

Fondly, Ellen Miller



Our April Messy Church will be all about Easter. We will explore the story of the Holy Week and the joy of the Easter morning. Come for an afternoon of fun! We will plant little Easter gardens, try our hands at Ukrainian Easter eggs, and much, much more. We will share in a Bible story and end with a delicious meal. Come as you are and sign up [here](#) to let us know for how many to prepare.



# FOR OUR FUTURE - VISIONING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING



Thank you to all who joined in person and online for our March 19 Visioning meeting. Many ideas were generated.

It was amazing! I did sense much positive energy, great ideas, and a “we-can-do-this” attitude at our second visioning event after worship on Sunday, March 19. Thanks to all who participated in person and online. We had 33 persons present.

I could feel God’s creative spirit among us. We are a vibrant congregation reaching for the stars! We accomplished one great next step in our visioning process after our initial gathering with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call in February. We gathered a plethora of ideas. They are listed below.

Our next step will be to sift through the ideas and decide which the most promising are. Then, we will prioritize them and see what we can accomplish over the next 1, 2, and 3 years. This next step will take place on Tuesday, April 11 at 7 p.m.

At our first gathering with Carrie Call in February we established four vision elements (categories) under which the individual goals and objectives will be listed. The four big categories are: passionate engagement, authentic welcome, spiritual growth, and faithful service. Objectives we considered to fall within these categories are hospitality (before worship): great coffee and muffins (refreshments),

sharing personal stories/experiences (in newsletter, worship, electronically), two “one-and-done” mission/service projects, new worship experiences (new format), exploring the need for an associate pastor, partnering with the Regional Engagement Center (REC) for some outreach projects (coat drive, etc.).

On March 19 we added the following: establishing small spirit groups (light groups/growth groups), consider new and different populations (Gen Z), partner with Susquehanna University, include youth/young adults in planning of events, gardening and cooking classes, “Meet and Eat,” mentoring (“adulting”), visitation team, financial literacy, contemporary music (rock), bingo (with children as “runners”), bartering (exchange) system (people offer and receive - give and take - according to their gifts/abilities), empower younger generation, community building, relationship building, offerings for young parents and families (like Messy Church), being flexible and fluid for (last minute) coming, not coming, and going (NO sign-up is needed), text reminders (people can opt in/opt out), consider various “populations,” (and various communication styles), explore new worship locations (in the park, by the boat ramp), future orientation with constant rethinking, hire consultant on contemporary worship style, consulting

with the REC about community outreach, being “out loud” in the community at many community events (like Chocolate Stroll, street fair, Farmer’s Market, etc.).

We welcome your ongoing input as we continue in the brainstorming phase. Please share your dreams, ideas, suggestions with me/us to consider them in our process. Email, call, text... we want your input, we need your input.

We have the video-recording of our second visioning event (brainstorming session) available for you on our website [here](#). Also, we have our collected strengths listed there and the evolving Strategic Plan 2023.

Please mark Tuesday, April 11 at 7 p.m. on your calendar for our next strategic planning event with Carrie Call. Then we will evaluate, sort, and decide how to proceed. I am hopeful that we will complete the process in a final step in May.

Wow! I’m excited about the opportunities and the great potential we have. And I’m impressed and grateful for all who are part of this visioning and strategic planning process. I hope you’ll join us for the next step on April 11 at 7!

Blessings,  
Pastor Dietmar

# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 14, 2023

*Because of the timing of the newsletter publication, these newsletter minutes are not the official, approved minutes. After the minutes have been approved at the next meeting, the final minutes are available upon request.*

**In Attendance:** Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Sigrid Plajer as guest, Allen Wetzel, Randy Tanner, Linda Turner, Kim Burkhart, John Fischer, Malcolm Derk, Mary Dahlmann, Michael Zettlemyer, Shane Sanders, Sara Adams, Josh Wenrich.

**Excused:** Amy Caron.

Randy Tanner, Vice President, presided over the meeting.

**Minutes of January Meeting:** A motion was made by Allen Wetzel, seconded by Shane Sanders and approved by Council to accept the minutes of the February meeting with no changes.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Dietmar highlighted the Visioning session (20 people were present), the current worship series "Looking for Love" and the need for more people to visit the homebound. Pastor Dietmar reported that, due to health issues, Bill Hockenbrock resigned from his responsibilities on the Stewardship & Finance Committee. He thanked Bill and recognized the work Bill has done for the church and his dedication to St. Paul's.

**Financial Report:** The February Financial Reports were reviewed by Linda Turner, highlighting the format change in the reports using the new Aplos software. Pastor Dietmar noted that the Finance Committee reviews these reports in great detail and there was no need to do so at Council meetings. A motion was made by John Fischer, seconded by Michael Zimmerman and approved by Council to accept the Financial Reports.

**Visioning for St. Paul's:** Pastor Dietmar reminded everyone that our next Visioning meeting is after church on Sunday, March 19, in person and via Zoom. On April 11 at 7p.m., Rev. Dr. Carrie Call will return for a follow-up meeting. The decision was made to have her return on our scheduled April 11 Council meeting day and to have a brief Council meeting from 6:30-7:00 p.m. prior to meeting with Rev. Call. This meeting will be in person and via Zoom.

**Personnel Committee:** Pastor Dietmar reported that an additional person is needed for the Personnel Committee. Mary Dahlmann will consider after she learns more about the committee.

**New Council Member:** We still need one more Council member.

**Visitation Ministry Coordinator:** Position remains open. Pastor Dietmar advised that a lay person, if interested, could fill the position. In the meantime, 7 more people are needed to visit the homebound. Kim Burkhart said she can visit and Pastor Dietmar will follow up with Kim.

**Communion for Holy Week:** Maundy Thursday - Sara Adams and Michael Zimmerman (bread and grapes are needed and they will purchase them). Easter Sunrise Service - Randy Tanner, Shane Sanders, and Allen Wetzel. Easter 10:30 a.m. service - Linda Turner, Mary Dahlmann, Kim Burkhart, Amy Caron, and Randy Tanner. Shane will set up for both Easter Sunday services, and Linda will make sure there is enough prepared for the 10:30 a.m. service. All who serve are to clean up the sanctuary and the prep room after both services.

**Church Safety Plan:** Nothing new to report.

**Opening and Affirming (ONA):** Randy Tanner attended the winter gathering with focus on ONA 201. Next steps were outlined for ONA congregations. He will pass along future events to Pastor Dietmar and to the church office.

**UCC Central Association Annual Meeting:** The meeting is being held at St. Paul's on Saturday, April 29 from 9 a.m. - 12 noon, and two representatives are needed. Randy Tanner and Linda Turner volunteered to be the representatives. Anyone can attend the meeting; however, only the representatives can vote on anything coming before the meeting.

**UC Funds:** With Bill Hockenbrock's resignation from S&F, we need to change the signatories on the UC Funds accounts. The recommendation was to have John Fischer, Marv Rudnitsky, and Linda Turner as signatories. By a motion made by Malcolm Derk and seconded by Allen Wetzel, St. Paul's UCC Council authorized John Fischer, Council President, Marvin Rudnitsky, acting Stewardship & Finance Chair, and Linda Turner, Treasurer, to act on behalf of St. Paul's in any future transactions for UC Fund Accounts 562220, 562221, 562222, 562223, and any other accounts which may be opened in the future. Internally, two signatures will be required for any transaction such as new account establishment, withdrawals, deposits, electronic funds transfer, transfer between accounts, etc. Linda Turner will prepare the document to change authorized signatories and obtain necessary signatures.

# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 14, 2023

**Hot Topics:** Shane Sanders reported that Hot Topics has been rescheduled from March to April 23. She also is working with Pastor Ruth Shaffer on a Bible study in the fall using the First Nations Version of the New Testament and hopes to partner with SU and Bucknell University to bring in a speaker.

**Communion:** There will be no communion on the first Sunday in April (Palm Sunday) as we will have communion on Maundy Thursday and on Easter Sunday.

**Next Council Meeting: April 11, 2023 - 6:30-7 PM - in person**

**and Zoom.**

**Visioning meeting follows at 7PM with Rev. Dr. Carrie Call**

**Devotions for next Meeting:** Shane Sanders  
The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Turner  
Council Secretary



## Heart of the Matter

*We invite you and your family to celebrate Holy Week & Easter with us!*

April 2 - Palm Sunday Worship at 10:30 AM

- Messy Church at 4 PM

April 6 - Maundy Thursday Worship at 7 PM

April 8 - Kids Night Out at 5:30 PM

April 9 - Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM

- Celebration Worship at 10:30 AM

During this Easter season we explore the heart of our faith. We will rise with Jesus to love and joy, to facing our challenges and to living from the heart. Join us for exciting, moving, and meaningful worship! We kick off with a big bang on Easter Sunday with a Sunrise service with Easter Fire at 6:30 a.m. on our front lawn and a great Celebration Service at 10:30. Join us in person or online.

## EARTH DAY - HOT TOPIC

April 23, 9:15 AM - St. Paul's Fellowship Hall

**Why Your ZipCode is More Important to Your Health than Your Genetic Code**

Presented by Biology Professors  
Drs. Peggy Peeler and Antonio Rockwell

## EARTH DAY HOT TOPIC!

Please join us in celebrating Earth Day with a Hot Topic presentation at 9:15 a.m. on Sunday, April 23 in St. Paul's Fellowship Hall downstairs.

Drs. Peggy Peeler and Antonio Rockwell will present on the topic of Environmental Justice: "Why Your ZipCode is More Important to Your Health than Your Genetic Code"

# PASTOR'S REPORT - FEBRUARY 2023

Our St. Paul's Mission is to grow in faith, to worship God, to serve others, and to welcome all.

We had an amazing "For Our Future" visioning event with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call with 20 persons from St. Paul's participating on Thursday, February 23. There was much excitement and positive energy around the themes of passionate engagement, authentic welcome, spiritual growth, and faithful service. We are a vital and vibrant congregation with many strengths and great potential! I hope that more members and friends of St. Paul's will join us in the visioning process in the coming months. All related info is available on our website.

"Looking for Love" is our new worship theme for Lent which we started with Ash Wednesday, March 22. Again this year, I provided, together with colleagues, "Ashes to Go" at the Selinsgrove Commons all day long. Next year, I need more help and reduced hours to offer this public ministry in order not to exhaust myself. We continue with the "Looking for Love" theme in worship, exploring where we can find true love, grace, healing, meaning, and purpose vs. looking for love "in all the wrong places." During this Lent, we need to re-orient ourselves to Jesus, who nurtures our souls and fosters our growing in faith. Thanks to the Worship Team for decorating the sanctuary to

perfection!

Currently, we have 25 members of our congregation who are homebound, semi-homebound, or in a nursing care facility. I am deeply grateful for our Visitation Team, 14 people who faithfully visit these persons on a monthly basis. We need eight more people who are willing and able to visit with one of our homebound persons one time per month. Also, we are still looking for a Visitation Ministry Team Coordinator to fill Pastor Penny's role. Please spread the word. I continue to visit people who are in the hospital receiving acute care, and provide home communion for those who find it meaningful. Please be in touch with me if you become aware of a need.

We celebrated the Baptism of Jacob Ulrich in worship on February 19, remembering our own baptisms: We belong to God. God claims us, affirms us, and delights in us. We are God's beloved! We continue to spread the message of God's unconditional love for all!

Our Children and Youth Ministries are amazing! Youth Leader, Torri Stark, teaches Children's Sunday School every week with about 10 children regularly participating. The monthly Kids Night Out program is a highlight for children, youths and their parents who get a night off. Jevan Beaver helps Torri Stark with the monthly Teen Group. Our inter-gen-

erational Messy Church program, co-ordinated by Sigrid Plajer, is one of St. Paul's key ministries. I am deeply grateful to ALL who volunteer, help, and support our children and youth programs! You are terrific!

I continue to serve on our UCC Central Association (CA) Executive Board, participate in the visioning process for our association and on the planning team for the CA's Annual Meeting which will take place here at St. Paul's on Saturday, April 29, 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon.

I officiated a service in celebration of the life legacy of Patricia Snook (91) on February 25 at River Woods in Lewisburg. Pat had passed away on January 29.

Thank you for your prayers, your witness, your giving, your service, and your faithfulness to God and to God's work through St. Paul's. I see God at work in and through you!

February 1-28, 2023

Days worked	16
Days off	08
Continuing Education	04
Vacation days	00
Sick Days	00
Holidays	00
Total Days	28

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Dietmar Plajer

APRIL 13 @ 6 PM

ST. PAUL'S GARAGE & SHED CLEANUP



♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

GARAGE AND SHED CLEANUP APRIL 13 AT 6 PM

Please come and help us clean out some of the accumulated stuff and other surprises that have been lingering in the garage and the shed. We want to make things look nice and organized and easily accessible. If you have any questions, please call Randy or the office. Otherwise, just show up on Thursday, April 13 at 6 p.m. ready to help. Thank you!!!

# MARCH MESSY CHURCH





## St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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[saintpauls-ucc.org](http://saintpauls-ucc.org)

**Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM**

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

*"God is Still Speaking"*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

