



THE MESSENGER

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

QUEST
THE AWAKENED TRAVELER

New Worship Series in August

Messy Church

Messy Church in the Park

August 13, 2023, 4 - 6 p.m.

Kick-Off Sunday

September 10

Everyone is invited to St. Paul's

Block Party & Messy Church

SEPTEMBER 10, 4-6 PM

ST. PAUL'S UCC
An Open and Affirming Congregation



JOIN THE JOURNEY

I have fond memories growing up hiking and backpack tenting in the Carpathian Mountains. Mostly, it was idyllic and delightful. But we also had some awful experiences. I remember being caught up in a storm above the tree line with gale force winds. Soaked to the bone we made our way down to a hut in the valley where we warmed up with hot soup and dried our clothes. On another occasion, we had a pack of sheep dogs attack us. They were ferocious, trained to scare off hungry bears who would come to take some sheep. We turned our backs toward each other and kept the dogs at a distance with our walking sticks. Finally, the shepherds noticed us and called the dogs off. What a sweet relief!

Our new summer worship series, "Quest: The Adventurous Traveler" invites us to explore new aspects of our lives and of our faith. Our Biblical stories describe Jesus as a traveling teacher and healer. The Gospels describe him saying, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man does not have a place to lay his head on." When Jesus calls his disciples, "Come and follow me," he calls them to leave their place of comfort, their profession and family for God's purposes in service to others. Hebrews describes it as, "For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come." As followers of Jesus, we are mission oriented, pushing forward, moving toward God's dream for us and for our community.

God calls Abraham and Sarah to leave their country, their home, and their family and move to a land that God will provide for them - the promised land. In the process, God promises to bless Abraham and Sarah and to make them a blessing for all nations. Abraham and Sarah had to pack up, let go, and move out of their familiar surroundings in following God's call. And so do we, as we listen to Jesus' call, "Come and follow me!" What holds you back? What is hard for you to let go? What keeps you from moving toward God's call for your life and for our community?

Like Abraham and Sarah, God is calling us to move toward the city on the hill, the promised land. God promises to guide and provide, to bless us to become a blessing to others. God is calling us to a better and promising future. A better world is possible! When the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was looking for the right words, Mahalia Jackson encouraged him, "Martin, tell them about the dream!" He took her up, improvising and adapting his speech to become the bold and amazing "I have a dream..." vision for our country and for the world.

This is God's dream for us, for our church and our community, God's beloved community where strangers become friends; where you are loved, valued, treasured, affirmed and celebrated for who you are; where you belong no matter your background, the color of

your skin, or your LGBTQ+ orientation; where no one goes hungry and everyone is fed, including with soul-food; where people are clothed with dignity and respect; where we care for each other and advocate for the vulnerable; where we laugh and cry together; where we are kin in our differences, God's diverse family!

What a bold and amazing vision for us at St. Paul's - to become God's beloved community. I'd love for us to expand our extravagant hospitality this fall with great coffee and treats before worship (this is part of our St. Paul's strategic plan). And I'd love to see some small Growth Groups form where we share our joys and concerns and grow together in faith, hope and love. Will you help with coffee hospitality before worship? Will you become part of a small group?

Will you get up and out of your comfort zone? Will you roll up your sleeves and lean in? Will you commit? We need you and we want you to help us become a better St. Paul's. I'm counting on you to participate wholeheartedly in the mission and ministries of St. Paul's as we build God's kingdom together.

Pastor Dietmar



WE ARE HIRING!

St. Paul's UCC is looking for a Youth Leader

Apply Now

- Sunday School
 - Kids Night Out
 - Teen Group
 - And More...
- 🌐 saintpauls-ucc.org/jobs
 - ✉ jobs@saintpauls-ucc.org
 - ☎ (570) 374-8749

THANK YOU, TORRI!

After two years of being St. Paul's youth leader, I have decided to resign for health and personal reasons. I enjoyed my time with the youth immensely and will continue to be involved as a volunteer. The kids have a piece of my heart, and I still want to nurture and mentor them as they grow in faith. Many thanks to all the people who helped me and supported the programs over the last two years. I am truly blessed and look forward to more fun and adventures in the future as a volunteer!

Torri Stark

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our Youth Leader, Torri Stark, for her faithful service during the last two years. Torri concludes her ministry on August 18.

Torri has been a phenomenal Youth Leader! Her love for the children, youth and families, her teaching, motivation, and commitment inspired all of us. Our St. Paul's is a better congregation because of her!

We are very grateful that Torri will continue as volunteer in the Christian Education department.

On behalf of Church Council, the children and families of St. Paul's, the Christian Education team, and the whole congregation, a great thank you!

Pastor Dietmar



AUGUST

BIRTHDAYS



- 8/01 Richard Lybarger
- 8/02 Bill Teisher
- 8/04 Bob Brown
Talisha Probst
- 8/05 Oliver Namminga
- 8/07 Amelia Gentile
Jack Lewis
John Snook
- 8/08 Ashtyn Lukens
Carolyn Proger
Rebecca Sporar
- 8/10 Nathan Lewis
Corey Troup
- 8/15 Sara Adams,
Donna McElroy
Rory Smith
- 8/16 Denise Haddon
- 8/17 Taleisha Burd
Sally Hayhurst
- 8/21 Matthew Beaver
- 8/24 Linda Forster
Janet Siegfried
Ben Williard
- 8/25 Norman Golden
Landon Williard
Justine Huss
Chanin Wendling
- 8/26 Tayla Derr
- 8/27 Helen Hannah
Derick Shambach
Landon Spriggle,
Andrew Wagner
- 8/28 Darlene Attig
Peggy Peeler
Devin Rhoads
Jane Ruhl,
Verlyn Smith
Thomas Spriggle
Dara Tuttle
- 8/30 Bob Engel

PRAYER LIST

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call
 Patty Erdly
 The Family of Dorothy Fabian
 The Father of Rev. Emily Livingston Garcia
 God's Creation
 Rev. Dena Holland-Neal
 Duane Koch
 Joe & Janeen Longer
 Wilbur Reddinger
 John Rothermel
 The Family of Fred Ulrich
 Anna Mary Wetzel

Deborah Weyandt
 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, under-
 standing
 Those who are dear and close to our
 hearts and those not named above
 The people of Ukraine and all those suffer-
 ing from the raging war

WELCOME BACKPACKS

Please help us support the work of Church World Services with their "Welcome Backpacks." CWS helps people around the world that are forced to leave their home and begin a new life in various parts of the US. Items need to be in the church office by September 14, 2023.

- Item 1 - a 17" Backpack
- Item 2 - a 1 Gallon Ziploc bag filled with:
 - 5 fruit leather strips
 - 4 protein bars
 - 10 granola bars
 - 6 fruit and grain bars
- 4 trail mix pouches – 1.75 oz.
- Item 3 - a 2.5 Gallon Ziploc bag filled with:
 - 2 bottles of hand sanitizer – 2 oz.
 - 1 Chapstick
 - 10 hair ties
 - 1 small travel hairbrush
 - 4 toothpaste/toothbrush packs
 - 3 packs of tissues
 - 10 disposable masks
 - 1 travel deodorant
 - 10 tampons
 - 10 sanitary napkins
 - 1 pack of cleaning/baby wipes

THANK YOU NOTES

Thanks to all the people who sent cards to Buddy during his illness. It really lifted his spirits. The many prayers helped too!
 Lela Strawser & Family

My sincere thank you to Dietmar and the St. Paul's family for your support during the end of Mom's earthly journey. Knowing someone cares is priceless when your heart is broken. I am grateful you were there for me.

Susan Harman, Charlotte Barben's daughter

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES



- 8/02 Barbara & Tim Reed
- 8/06 Raven & Marvin Rudnitsky
- 8/09 Peggy & Tom Peeler
- 8/10 Deb & Tony Martello
- 8/13 Ben & Kelsey Williard
- 8/14 Debra & Bruce Witkop
- 8/18 Bob & Jeanne Engel
- 8/19 Sigrid & Dietmar Plajer
Kathy & Derek Straub
Shelly & Willie Wolfe
- 8/23 Vivian & Terry Beaver



Join us on August 13 (rain date August 20) from 4 to 6 p.m. for an exciting and fun-filled Messy Church! We extend a warm invitation to friends, families, and individuals of all ages to come and experience the joy of messy crafts, interactive games, and community. We will explore the story of Noah's Ark. Come and discover the beauty of Messy Church as we make lasting memories and connect with our faith in a unique and engaging way. We can't wait to see you there! Sign up [here](#) so we can prepare for you!

Sigrid and the Messy Church Team



We are excited about our Block Party, inviting our community to celebrate with us. The Block Party is a wonderful way for our neighbors and friends from the community to get to know who we are and what we are about. Again this year, we will offer games, crafts, food, bingo, a raffle, and more. Please help us make the block party happen. We need helpers for setting up, for the Messy Church

activities, serving the food, selling raffle tickets, and cleaning up. Please contact the church office at office@saintpauls-ucc.org or (570) 374-8749 if you are able to help. Shane Sanders is spearheading the planning team for the Block Party. Please mark your calendar and invite family, neighbors and friends to join us for an exciting afternoon full of fun!

Block Party Basket Raffle

The Block Party is right around the corner, September 10th, and St. Paul's is, again, having a basket raffle. We would appreciate a basket, gift cards, something old... The baskets and items can be dropped off

at St. Paul's from August 21st thru September 1st. There will be two tables set up in the hallway across from the coat room to place your donations. Thank you to all!!

Barbie Reed

A Note from the Director

It's time to think about bringing choral music to the congregation again! I know that there must be those of you out there that would enjoy singing with the Senior Choir. I choose a varied selection of music, from differing genres and time periods. We always enjoy each other's company as we lift our spirits, doing something we love! We rehearse on Wednesday nights at 7 p.m., and this season we will begin on August 30th. We will prepare to join together in celebration and song on Kick-Off Sunday, which is September 10th. Please get in touch with any questions (office@saintpauls-ucc.org or 5703748749). See you soon!

Amy Caron, Senior Choir Director



ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING JULY 11, 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, John Fischer, Malcolm Derk, Mary Dahlmann, Shane Sanders, Sara Adams, Amy Caron, Fritz Heinemann. Guests: Susan Bolig and Pastor Mary Peterhaensel.

Excused: Josh Wenrich, Kim Burkhart, Michael Zettlemoyer

Minutes of June Meeting: The June meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dietmar sent his report out in advance of the meeting and there were no questions from Council.

Financial Report: The June Financial Reports were sent out in

advance of the meeting and were approved as submitted with no concerns.

Strategic Planning: Pastor Dietmar reported that Chris Jaegers is exploring with him plans for hospitality before and after the worship service targeting a start date in September.

Associate Pastor: Pastor Dietmar reported that he talked to Peggy Peeler and she is willing to chair the Search Committee. Council unanimously voted to approve Peggy as Chair. Pastor Dietmar stated that the UCC does provide support in our search.

United Church Funds: Linda Turner reported that the transfer from UC Funds to Northumberland National Bank has been completed and, once all paperwork has been signed, accounts will be set up and funded.

Property & Grounds: Allen Wetzel reported that, due to issues with his shoulder, he is no longer able to mow the cemetery and his son is unable to take over. Allen will contact Mike



Proger to determine next steps. Second installment payment to Strosser/Baer for \$3,000 came in and will be paid this week. No further updates.

Emergency Plan: Randy Tanner reported that he, Linda Turner and Jacob Koch walked through the building and came up with several items that need to be completed for the Emergency Plan.

Block Party, September 10th: Shane Sanders reported she was asking Jack Lewis and Allen Wetzel to cook hot dogs. Randy Tanner has agreed to run Bingo and Kim Haizlett and possibly Barbie Reed will help with Bingo and raffle prizes. Sigrid Plajer will create a block party banner and Sara Adams agreed to procure music.

Youth Leader Resignation: Pastor Dietmar reported that Torri Stark had submitted her resignation as Youth Leader as of August 18th and Council voted to accept the resignation and to thank her for her dedication to the position and to the youth of the church.

Children and Youth Ministries: Pastor Dietmar reported that Christian Education and Personnel updated the position description for Youth Leader, changing Kids Night Out and Teen

Group to once a quarter and changing the hours to 12 hours per week for 11 months. The position will be advertised noting that it can be divided into more than one position if no one can be found to take on the full responsibility. Council voted to approve the position description and the options for filling it.

“Quest: The Awakened Traveler” is the new worship series for July 30-September 10 (Kick-Off Sunday).

Communion August 6: Class of '24 will serve - Kim Burkhart, Randy Tanner, Josh Wenrich, and Allen Wetzel (captain).

Pastor Dietmar Vacation: Pastor Dietmar requested vacation for July 17-23 and Council unanimously approved the vacation. Rev. Darin Namminga will fill in on July 23rd and Rev. Amelia Price will provide pastoral care for the week.

Devotions for August 8th Meeting: Linda Turner

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Turner
Council Secretary



PASTOR'S REPORT JUNE 2023

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

We explored the need for an associate pastor with the executive team of Church Council (President, VP, and Secretary), the Pastoral Relations Team, and the Personnel Committee in a meeting on June 11. This leadership team decided that we need an associate pastor:

- to implement our strategic plan which outlines many new ministry opportunities (see articles in our June/July newsletter),
- to grow and thrive as a congregation,
- and to provide leadership for ministries which are beyond what volunteer leaders can accomplish. Church Council discussed and supported the cause unanimously. We need additional funding to pay for an associate pastor.

We invite all from the congregation to ask questions and to provide input. The next steps in the process will be to establish a search committee. Stay tuned for more information.

Finally, our Visitation Ministry will be back up and running with two new leaders. Pastor Mary Peterhaensel (a retired Lutheran pastor) will function as Visitation Ministry Pastor and Susan Bolig as Visitation Ministry Coordinator. They share the responsibilities that Pastor Penny Dollar fulfilled pre-pandemic.



The Visitation Ministry depends on people like you and me who are willing to "adopt" one of our members or friends who is homebound (semi-homebound) or residing in a care facility. Currently, we have 25 members of St. Paul's who are homebound or residing in a nursing home. We need a few more volunteers who are willing to visit.

With great sadness we received notice that regretfully our Youth Leader, Torri Stark, will resign her position on August 18. It has become too much for Torri to work full-time at Susquehanna University and, in addition to that, as our Youth Leader. Torri has been a phenomenal Youth Leader. Her love and dedication to the children, youth, and families has been exemplary. She is an excellent educator who loves God and teaches joyfully. We will miss Torri much. It will be extremely hard to find a new Youth Leader who will serve like Torri.

The musical contributions for our summer worship services have been extraordinary in quality and variety. I am deeply grateful to all who share their time and talents in ministry. A great thank you goes to Joanne Lauer who coordinates and schedules our musicians. She does an outstanding job!

Together with Randy Tanner I participated in the UCC Penn Central Conference Annual Meeting on June 9 and 10 via Zoom with the theme "Renewing the Covenant." The meeting focused on how



we are together in ministry.

I'm planning for a summer worship series, "Quest: The Awakened Traveler" together with the worship team. The focus will be on how traveling opens us up to new experiences and new ways of growing in faith. Traveling does not need to be physical. We can go many places on an inner exploration.

Lois Ely passed away on June 7 and we celebrated her life with a service in our sanctuary on June 16. I officiated a service for Velvet Frazetto (Jackie Naugle's daughter) on June 10. Jack Riegel passed away on June 27. Our Card and Care Ministry team continues to lift up in prayer families like these and assures them and many others of God's presence.

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!

June 1-30, 2023

Days worked	16
Days off	04
Continuing Education	03
Vacation days	07
Sick Days	00
Holidays	00
Total Days	30

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



PICTURES FROM OUR VBS





St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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office@saintpauls-ucc.org

saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:00 AM

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

"God is Still Speaking"

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

