



THE MESSENGER

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

Messy Church

Christmas
Messy Church

December 12 at 4 PM

the inn

HOUSING THE HOLY

Advent and Christmas 2021 Worship Series

*Blue Christmas
Worship Service*

December 19 at 7 PM

*Christmas Eve
Services*

Family Service at 4 pm
Traditional Service at 7 pm



WHAT MAKES FOR A MEANINGFUL CHRISTMAS?

I am drawn to the ancient Christmas stories and how relevant and meaningful they are for us today.

The Angel Gabriel surprises teenage Mary with amazing news: God chooses Mary to give birth to Jesus, to become real, flesh and blood in our world. Following in Mary's footsteps, can you become attuned to how God wants to become real and tangible in and through you? Mary opens her heart and offers her life, embracing God's purpose, "Yes! I'm ready to serve. May it happen as you wish!" Do you pay attention to and discern what God's will is for you? Will you open your heart to God and be receptive for God's will?

Joseph gets cold feet when he gets wind that Mary is pregnant, and he's not the father. That is not how he had imagined and planned for their relationship. He tries to get out of it and plans to elope. This time, Joseph encounters an angel, who asks him to stay, to embrace Mary and the baby. Joseph decides to stick around, to take on responsibility

for mother and child. He buys into God's plan for his life even though God's plan upsets his life and his plans. Joseph makes peace with God and with himself. Following in Joseph's footsteps, can you do that, too?

When Mary becomes aware of her pregnancy, that the angel's message to her is true and real, she rushes to visit with her cousin and friend Elizabeth. It is a special gift to have a friend or family member you can trust and share your joys and frustrations with. Mary and Elizabeth model that close relationship for us. When we share our joy, it multiplies. When we share our pain, it diminishes. To whom can you listen like a friend?

The shepherds are in the dark, rejected and outcast. Tending sheep in the fields, they are on the fringes of society, disregarded. It is to them that the good news of great joy is revealed first. God's angel proclaims that love becomes real in Jesus, in human form, walking among us. There is hope when you feel like you're walking in the dark; when you feel

lonely and abandoned. God's light shines into the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.

During this Advent and Christmas season I invite you to open your heart to God like Mary, embracing God's will for your life; to make peace with God and with yourself like Joseph, especially if God's plans differ from yours; to listen and share like Mary and Elizabeth joy and frustrations; and like the shepherds, to be receptive for the light that shines into the darkness, for the love that becomes real, embodied in Jesus and in those walking among us.

This is the heart of Christmas. Following in the footsteps of Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, and the shepherds makes Christmas deeply meaningful, makes it the sacred season where we encounter the living God.

Have a meaningful, joy-filled, peaceful Advent and Christmas full of love!

Pastor Dietmar



NEW WORSHIP SERIES - THE INN: HOUSING THE HOLY

The Inn: Housing the Holy - We invite you to open your heart to the holy this season as we focus on the true meaning of Advent and Christmas. Beginning with our First Sunday in Advent on November 28, we explore how we make room, open up, welcome, receive, and embrace the Christ Child into our lives and how we let his light shine into our darkness. Let the characters of the Christmas Story draw you in as we are looking together for hope, peace, joy, and love during this holy season. Invite your colleagues, neighbors and friends to join us for worship in person or online.



SUNDAY SCHOOL

We are wrapping up our Old Testament lessons focused on faith and God's promises. Advent & Christmas will be the December focus with lessons from the New Testament starting in January. We welcome all children grades K-5 and parents/grandparents, too!



KIDS GROUP

Kids Group continues to meet Wednesdays after school from 3:00 - 5:15. The children love the Holy Moly curriculum videos and learning about the patriarchs in the Old Testament. We will shift our focus to Advent & Christmas in December and start lessons from the New Testament in January. All kids in grades K-5 are welcome!



TREE FEST

Once again, the youth of St. Paul's will be decorating a tree for the Snyder County Library's Tree Fest. This year's book is "A Wish for Wings That Work" by Berkley Breathed. Be sure to stop by the library during regular library hours or visit the virtual site after Thanksgiving to see it!

FROM OUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT

As we wind down to the end of 2021, I want to express my gratitude for the wonderful people at St Paul's.

I have appreciated all of your support and words of encouragement while I was your Church Council President. I have learned so much about the church and the time commitment it takes to make things happen from planning worship services, music, building upkeep, hiring staff and so much more. Mostly, I witnessed

the love that everyone shares to support each other, our programs and the outreach for our community.

Thank you to Pastor Dietmar and his support while I learned and persevered in my new role. Thank you to all of the council members and the time commitment you gave so freely.

May you have a wonderful Christmas season. Embrace Jesus' love for us and may He guide you each and every day.

Many Blessings, Susan Bolig



DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

12/02	Bruce Dively
12/03	Justin Womer
12/04	Matthew Cope
12/05	Kim Burkhart
	Michael Doyne
12/08	Becky Bramer
	Charlie McCuen
12/09	Joe Dubaskas, Sr.
	Max Gemberling
12/10	Marv Rudnitsky
12/12	Jonathan Cope
	Tyler Long
	Keith Minier
12/13	John "Jake" McCabe
12/14	Roger S. "Sam" Haddon, III
12/17	Darius Holmes
	Kimberly Riegel
12/19	Ricky Cope
	Robert Rathfon
12/21	Lois Bruno
	Sherry Herlinger
	Michael Reed
12/25	Michael Bolig
	Derek Straub
12/27	Shane Sanders
12/30	Kim Rigel
12/31	Nick Berger

DECEMBER

ANNIVERSARIES

12/01	Bruce & Gayle Dively
12/03	Jodi & Jim Cope
12/08	Linsley & Jamie Gentile
12/30	Molly & Andy Snyder

PRAYER LIST

Members:

Al & Dot Deans
David & Helen Hannah
Wilbur & Cheryl Reddinger
Jim Taylor
Kathy Ulrich

Friends:

Jan Garinger
Tom Lenhard
Tunde Ogunnaike
The family of Martha Reineker
All affected by Covid-19

All who lost their jobs
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

Special prayers for all those who are serving in the military, leaders of the world, those who are working for peace and understanding, and all the children of the world.

THANK YOU

To my St. Paul's family:

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your prayers, cards, phone calls, well wishes, and food as I recover from knee surgery. It has been quite the year for me, but I know all your thoughts, words, and deeds have been so very instrumental to my healing.

I see God's love in the folks at St. Paul's and I will be forever grateful for your kindness and friendship.

God Bless!
Cheryl Reddinger

Dear Mixed Adult Sunday School Class:

I wish to thank you for the beautiful plaque that was given in memory of my husband, Richard for his many years of teaching your class. The plaque hangs in the Parlor.

Thank you also for the landscaping in the front of the church in memory of Richard and in honor of me. It was very thoughtful of you all to remember and honor us in this way.

In Christian Love,
Nancy Wagner
(former church secretary)

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING DECEMBER 12

At the end of our Dec. 12 worship service we will have our Annual Congregational Meeting to vote on the slate of five new Council members for the 2022-2024 term: Kimmie Burkhart, Craig Stark, Randy Tanner, Joshua Wenrich, and Allen Wetzel. Also, we will vote on the 2022 Mission Plan (budget) that is included in this newsletter. Please share all your questions with the Stewardship and Finance committee via the church office to help us prepare for a smooth and short meeting. Thank you!

JOIN US FOR MESSY CHURCH ON DECEMBER 12 AT 4 PM



At our December Messy Church, we will focus on the story of Christmas. We have plans for making candles without any hot wax, stencil reusable gift bags with acrylic paints, immerse ourselves as participants in the Christmas story, have fun with Christmas crackers, and go on a journey to Bethlehem. Please come dressed with clothes that a little permanent paint blob here or there won't ruin. We look forward to spending a fun afternoon with you! Let us know that you're coming so we can prepare well! Here's the [link](#) to sign up!

FUN AT OUR NOVEMBER MESSY CHURCH



ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING - NOVEMBER 9, 2021

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: Sara Adams, Marty Blessing, Susan Bolig, Bob Engel, Courtney Hanes, Peggy Peeler, Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Sigrid Plajer, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, Kathy Ulrich, Jack Lewis, Rick Campbell.

Excused: Amy Caron, Beverly Heinemann, Stacy Heinemann, Ivana Lluveras, Michael Zettlemoyer.

Minutes: A motion was made by Bob Engel and seconded by Linda Turner to approve the minutes from October 12th. The motion was approved.

Financial Report: Courtney Hanes reported, presenting the financial reports from October, which were sent to Council ahead of time. One note was that the Kitchen Cupboard has been moved under the umbrella of Community Action Agency, and they dispersed some funds to various organizations that had supported that program mentioned, including \$5,000 to St. Paul's. Jack Lewis moved to accept the financial report as read, Bob Engel seconded, and the motion was approved.

2022 Budget: Courtney also walked the Council through the proposed 2022 budget. December 12th is the annual meeting when the budget will be presented to the congregation, along with the new Council members, for a vote by the congregation. Peggy Peeler moved that we approve the 2022 budget, Rick Campbell seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by Council.

Pastor's Report: Included in newsletter.

Unfinished Business & New Business:

- **Worship Service:** We will continue to follow CDC guidelines.
- **Worship in person, via internet and by phone:** How can we improve? How is Tech team with volunteers going? Sigrid reported. Things are continuing as planned – we have some very dedicated volunteers; that helps a lot. Things are going well.
- **Adult Sunday School classes:** Pastor Dietmar shared that the Thursday evening topic of a spiritual awakening and exploring what that means – how religion was organized, etc. makes for a great and meaningful conversation. What

is going on in overall society and how is God calling us in a new way to being a person of faith?

- **Confirmation Group Updates:** Pastor Dietmar shared. In addition to the traditional instruction, he is trying to do a little more multi-sensory approach to the deeper level of the soul and the personality. If you go beyond the traditional creeds and statements of faith, what are the images and meanings connected to them?
- **Stewardship Program:** Council planned for church members to be receiving their personal stewardship invitations from Council members in the mail this week, before the Nov. 14th Stewardship Sunday.
- **New Council Members for 2022:** The 5 new members will be presented as a slate to the congregation during the annual meeting on Dec. 12th to be voted upon by the congregation.
- **Green Team/Living into Right Relationships Committee:** The LRR committee is in the process of being created and launched – Shane is waiting on some more responses from potential committee members, with the hopes that the first meeting will take place in January. More information on that can be found in the CG&M meeting minutes.
- **Holiday season services:** The Worship Committee talked about inviting people to help with decorating the sanctuary for Christmas on Nov. 28th, as well as the idea of holding in-person Christmas Eve – including how to make it safer.
- **A Thank you note** received from Dietmar & Sigrid regarding Pastor Appreciation Sunday was read to Council.

Committee Reports: Minutes from their November meetings are available upon request.

- **Church Growth and Membership**
- **Worship Committee**
- **Personnel Committee Report**
- **Property and Grounds:** Rick Campbell reported on various work being done around the church property, and plans for future work. Of note: The kitchen is now ready for full use again, and Mike Proger saw to it that when the boiler broke, it was fixed before Sunday's church service. A big thanks to Mike!!

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, December 14th, 2021 @ 7pm
Linda Turner will provide Devotions.

Respectfully submitted,
Shane Sanders, Council Secretary



St. Paul's United Church of Christ and the Selinsgrove Area Christian Council supplied 8 families including 31 people with fixings for a delicious Thanksgiving meal.



ABOUT THE 2022 MISSION PLAN BUDGET

Presented are a few pieces of information about the 2022 Mission Plan Budget. With the projected increase in income and increased expenses, we are still able to present a balanced budget.

Offering income (envelopes & Breeze) was increased \$49,688.00 over last year's budget. We project in 2021 we will exceed budget and feel comfortable with the amount of increase.

Insurance costs have increased for building/content and flood insurance - \$4,700.00.

Subscription software is a new budget line item for all licenses,

software, and other items related to streaming, Zoom meetings, video transmission, etc. - \$2,600.00.

All staff, employees and Pastor, that have been employed for one year were granted a 3% salary increase.

Pastor Dietmar will be on sabbatical leave in 2022 for three months. A supply pastor was budgeted - \$6,000.00.

We currently do not have a visitation minister on staff, but we expect to fill this position in 2022, budgeted - \$3,600.00.

Bill Hockenbrock, Stewardship and Finance Chair

**St Paul's United Church of Christ
Operating Budget
2022**

		Budget 2021	2022 Budget
Income			
INCOME			
Current Revenue and Support			
1	Ash Wednesday	400.00	550.00
2	Bulletins	50.00	50.00
3	Christmas Eve	2,500.00	2,500.00
4	Current Offering-Envelopes	282,000.00	215,514.00
5	Current Offering-Breeze		116,174.00
6	Flowers	500.00	500.00
7	Initial Envelopes	225.00	200.00
8	Interest Income	0.00	0.00
9	Louise Long Trust	17,413.00	0.00
10	Maundy Thursday	400.00	200.00
11	Miscellaneous	1,000.00	275.00
12	Plate Offering	1,000.00	1,000.00
13	T. Kantz Trust	50.00	50.00
14	Use of Facilities	600.00	400.00
15	Total Current Revenue and Support	306,138.00	337,413.00
Expense			
EXPENSES			
BUILDING AND GROUNDS			
16	Electric	6,500.00	6,500.00
17	Gas Heat	6,300.00	6,300.00
18	Insurance	23,000.00	27,700.00
19	Landscaping	300.00	500.00
20	Lawn Mowing	1,200.00	1,200.00
21	Maintenance and Supplies	4,700.00	1,500.00
22	Grease Traps/AC	0.00	0.00
23	Property Taxes	275.00	280.00
24	Repairs	2,500.00	2,500.00
25	Snow Removal	2,000.00	2,000.00

**St Paul's United Church of Christ
Operating Budget
2022**

	<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>2022 Budget</u>	
26	Waste Disposal	456.00	500.00
27	Water/Sewer	1,000.00	500.00
28	Total BUILDING AND GROUNDS	48,231.00	49,480.00
	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION		
29	Church Camp/Retreat	800.00	400.00
30	Continuing Ed for Teachers	200.00	200.00
31	Extracurricular	100.00	100.00
32	Messy Church	3,000.00	3,000.00
33	Sunday School	750.00	750.00
34	Teen Group	1,500.00	1,500.00
35	Vacation Bible School	500.00	500.00
36	Youth	1,500.00	1,500.00
37	Total CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	8,350.00	7,950.00
	COMMITTEE WORK		
38	Fellowship	1,225.00	1,225.00
39	Green Team	500.00	500.00
40	Membership and Church Growth	500.00	500.00
41	Ministry	200.00	200.00
42	Personnel	350.00	250.00
43	Publicity	1,250.00	1,000.00
44	Worship	1,000.00	1,600.00
45	Total COMMITTEE WORK	5,025.00	5,275.00
	MUSIC		
46	Accompanying	150.00	150.00
47	Choir Instruments	100.00	0.00
48	Choir Recognition	225.00	250.00
49	Choir Robe Maintenance	100.00	200.00
50	Instrument Maintenance	1,300.00	1,000.00
51	Music	500.00	500.00
52	Pianist/Organist	5,500.00	0.00
53	Total MUSIC	7,875.00	2,100.00

**St Paul's United Church of Christ
Operating Budget
2022**

		<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>2022 Budget</u>
OFFICE EXPENSES			
54	Breeze	3,300.00	3,300.00
55	Equipment and Technology	1,000.00	1,000.00
56	Leased Equipment	3,000.00	3,500.00
57	Miscellaneous Office Expense	0.00	200.00
58	Office/Worship Materials	3,000.00	3,000.00
59	Payroll Service	2,500.00	2,500.00
60	Postage	1,400.00	1,200.00
61	Subscription Software	0.00	2,600.00
62	Telephone & Internet	2,700.00	2,800.00
63	Total OFFICE EXPENSES	<u>16,900.00</u>	<u>20,100.00</u>
OTHER EXPENSES			
64	Association Dues	500.00	500.00
65	UCC Conferences	400.00	400.00
66	Total OTHER EXPENSES	<u>900.00</u>	<u>900.00</u>
PASTOR			
67	Dental Insurance	984.00	984.00
68	Group Life & Disability	1,245.00	1,283.00
69	Health Insurance	22,464.00	23,592.00
70	Housing	19,162.00	19,736.00
71	Medical Expenses	4,000.00	4,000.00
72	Retirement	11,625.00	11,973.00
73	Salary	63,871.00	65,787.00
74	Social Security	6,352.00	6,543.00
75	Vision Benefits	183.00	183.00
76	Total PASTOR	<u>129,886.00</u>	<u>134,081.00</u>
PASTORAL - OTHER			
77	Cell Phone	800.00	800.00
78	Continuing Education	1,000.00	1,200.00
79	Meeting Expense	200.00	200.00
80	Mileage Reimbursement	2,250.00	2,250.00

**St Paul's United Church of Christ
Operating Budget
2022**

		<u>Budget 2021</u>	<u>2022 Budget</u>
81	Professional Publications	400.00	400.00
82	Supply Pastor	900.00	900.00
83	Sabbatical Pastor	0.00	6,000.00
84	Total PASTORAL - OTHER	<u>5,550.00</u>	<u>11,750.00</u>
SALARY SCHEDULE			
85	Custodian	17,445.00	17,968.00
86	Financial Secretary	2,110.00	2,173.00
87	Joyful Noise Accompaniment	749.00	1,355.00
88	Joyful Noise Director	1,313.00	2,626.00
89	Media Technician	1,560.00	2,014.00
90	Media, Technology Communication	17,675.00	18,205.00
91	Nursery Attendant	1,285.00	2,648.00
92	Secretary	10,171.00	11,124.00
93	Senior Choir Accompanist	749.00	2,430.00
94	Senior Choir Director	1,556.00	3,500.00
95	Pianist/Organist	5,500.00	5,500.00
96	Treasurer	6,695.00	6,000.00
97	Visitation Ministry	0.00	3,600.00
98	Youth Choir Accompanist	749.00	0.00
99	Youth Christian Ed Director	12,051.00	17,680.00
100	Youth Sunday School	2,009.00	0.00
101	Z Employer Payroll Taxes	5,704.00	7,306.00
102	Z Workers' Comp Insurance	1,600.00	1,648.00
103	Total SALARY SCHEDULE	<u>83,421.00</u>	<u>105,777.00</u>
104	Total EXPENSES	<u>306,138.00</u>	<u>337,413.00</u>
105	Net Income	<u><u>0.00</u></u>	<u><u>0.00</u></u>

PASTOR'S REPORT - OCTOBER 2021

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

"Rooted in Love - Love Flows" - I am grateful to all who let their love flow in and through our stewardship season as we channel Jesus' love to those in need. I am grateful to all who shared about why they love St. Paul's and where they notice that love flows in and through our ministries. The witnessing stewards, Missy McCabe, Marv Rudnitsky, and Lois Bruno, touched my heart as they shared in worship. Through the stewardship mailings, the invitation is out to our fellows in faith and ministry to let love flow generously in and through their giving commitment for 2022. Thanks to all for participating in this expression of faith!

How do we connect with our soul and with God was the focus of the first weeks of our Confirmation Group I am teaching on Sunday mornings at 9 AM. We have five confirmands: Jane Berger, Danika Burd, Amelia Gentile, Katie Proger, and Zack Stark. I am very grateful that Youth Leader Torri Stark and Linda Turner function as mentors. The confirmands and their mentors with parent expressed meaningfully in worship about their learning on October 24.

We continue in the worship series "Learning to Pray" about why and how to pray. I received much positive feedback about the prayer stations, the candle installation, the prayer cross, the community prayer ribbons and the prayer beads. My heartfelt gratitude goes to all those who provide Children's Messages

and who shared about their personal experience with prayer -Margaret Weirick on October 10 and Susan Bolig on October 17 about selfcare.

Our Messy Church program for all ages resumed in the Fellowship Hall in October, giving children, families, and adults an opportunity to explore faith in fun ways every second Sunday of the month at 4 PM. On October 10 the focus was on the story of blind Bartimaeus. All enjoyed the obstacle course, the crafts, and games. To keep everyone safe, we hand out goodie bags instead of providing a family style meal.

Youth Leader Torri Stark does a phenomenal job with teaching Children's Sunday school during our worship service. Torri is very creative and plans wonderfully for the Kids Group on Wednesday afternoons. I am very grateful to all who support Torri and our children by volunteering as helpers for Kids' Group and Sunday school. Linda Turner is key to making the Kids Group work great!

We thanked, honored, and remembered in gratitude all participants, helpers, and volunteers of the Kitchen Cupboard food pantry, the Kitchen Committee and the many hard workers who prepared and served so many meals through the years on October 24. The Community Action Agency took on the responsibility to provide food for persons who face emergencies. In deep gratitude for the legacy of Richard Wagner, the Mixed Adult Sunday school class members dedicated a plaque in his memory. St. Paul's would not be the church it is without the many

volunteers and hardworking helpers!

Embracing Spiritual Awakening is the theme of the Group Study that Raven Rudnitsky facilitates on Thursday evenings via Zoom. It is deeply meaningful as we explore together where and how God is calling us to grow in faith and open up to the Spirit's movements, inviting God to transform us. Thanks to Raven and to all who participate!

I officiated the gravesite service for Annie Adee, a past member of our congregation on October 13. I continue to visit with persons who are facing life-altering challenges and with prospective members and friends of St. Paul's.

I am grateful to Rev. Darin Namminga for preaching and for leading the worship service on October 17 while I helped our two sons, Felix and Max move into an apartment in New Haven, CT.

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. You are the hands and heart of Jesus in action!

October 1-31, 2021

Days worked	19
Days off	09
Continuing Education	00
Vacation days	03
Holidays	00
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



YOUR DONATION TO THE CHRISTMAS FUND WILL MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE!



In 2020, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled the UCC nationwide to provide monthly pension supplementations for 276 retired clergy and lay employees, health benefits supplementation for 89 retired clergy and lay employees, emergency grants for 96 individuals and families, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks to 504 retired clergy and lay employees.

Since March of last year, our lives have been drastically disrupted by the COVID pandemic, and many have experienced great loss. These months have also had a profound impact on United Church of Christ clergy and congregations—physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially.

We have labored through this difficult time together, and because of gifts to the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, our active and retired pastors who have been affected the most have known they are not alone.

Last year, donations to the Christmas Fund helped pay the rent for low-income retired ministers and bridged the gap for one active minister’s family when her husband lost his restaurant due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Christmas Fund gifts took care of the unexpected expense of a major car repair, helped a retired minister attend his brother’s funeral, and assisted in paying for daunting medical expenses, prescriptions, and groceries.

When money is tight and stress is high, your gift to the Christmas Fund brings relief and hope to the clergy and church employees who have dedicated their lives to serving our churches and each of us. You help the people who have helped us. You make a huge difference and bring great joy!

In the words of an emergency grant recipient, “Your letter has brought great joy and relief. The grant is enough to allow me a little breathing room at the end of each month. Thank you for that gift. But equally important to me personally is this grant symbolizes a wonderful connection to the church I love. I have been blessed in so many ways.”

Thank you for your considering a generous contribution to the Christmas Fund.





St. Paul's United Church of Christ

400 North Market Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Tel 570-374-8749

office@saintpauls-ucc.org

www.saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM
either on Facebook, YouTube, or our website

“God is Still Speaking”

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...



Thanksgiving Worship Service, November 21, 2021.