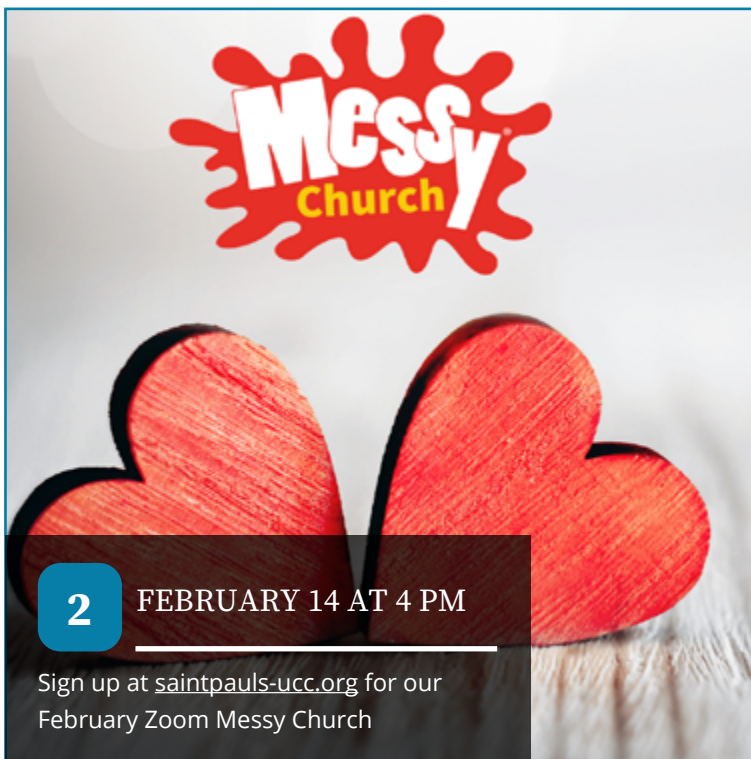




THE MESSENGER

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



2 FEBRUARY 14 AT 4 PM

Sign up at saintpauls-ucc.org for our February Zoom Messy Church



2 LENT/EASTER BELL CHOIR ENSEMBLE

Join us for a socially distant, easy to play bell choir to celebrate Lent and Easter



5 HOLY VESSELS
NEW WORSHIP SERIES

A Lenten Season of Recovery - beginning Ash Wednesday, February 17, 2021

ON DARKNESS AND LIGHT, UNITY AND DIVERSITY

I was moved by the symbolism of the remembrance for the 400,000 people in the US who died of Covid-19 at the Lincoln Memorial on Tuesday, January 19. I was taken by the 400 lights set up on both sides of the reflective pool at the Lincoln Memorial. Covid-19 does not take sides. When it comes to suffering, death, and grieving, there is no split into right or left political camps. It is only we, our common humanity.

We come together to grieve. We come together to mourn. We recognize, "We are together in this!" I was touched by the invocation of Cardinal Wilton Gregory. I recognize in the face of the awful Covid-19 loss, that life is fragile and precious. In the face of death and loss, I feel called to open up to a greater power, God. It was a somber remembrance. You and I, everyone knows someone who died of Covid-19. Shattered lives, broken families, darkness and grief.

I was moved by the soulful "Amazing

Grace" sung by Lori Marie Key, a nurse who finds hope and strength by singing while serving on her hospital ward.

The Lincoln Memorial has its own symbolism. Facing a divided nation, President Abraham Lincoln saved the union. Today, you participate in restoring unity when you turn to someone (instead of turning away) when you reach out (instead of hiding out) and recognize the face of God (instead of looking for the enemy) in the person next to you. Our common humanity matters more than ever in the face of Covid-19.

I am moved by the vision of the United Church of Christ, to draw in people of various faiths backgrounds and convictions to create a whole, a united church. We are working toward unity with diversity.

I love the US motto you see on every coin and bill, "E pluribus unum," meaning,

"Out of Many, One." We draw together in the face of loss and suffering. We come together in the face of adversity. We recognize together that "united we stand, divided we fall!" As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We must learn to live together as [sisters and] brothers or perish together as fools."

As the night settles in with its darkness and grief, the 400 lights keep shining, reflecting their light to you and me. I invite you to let your light shine as we face the darkness of loss and grief together. We do it in the hope that God's light shines in the darkness and the darkness can not overcome it.

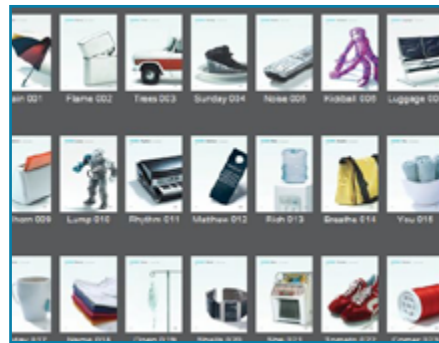
In faith, hope, and love,

Pastor Dietmar



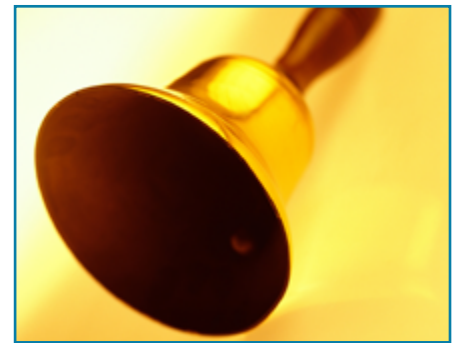
ZOOM MESSY CHURCH FEBRUARY 14 AT 4 PM

Sign up [here](#) for our next Zoom Messy Church. Our theme will be LOVE. You will receive everything you need for the crafts plus a small surprise delivered to your home. We can't wait to see you! This is for people of all ages, not just children and families.



HOW TO GROW IN FAITH WEDNESDAY AT 7 PM

What does one need to grow in faith? A loving community and meaningful conversations around interesting topics. Raven and Lois will offer that opportunity for you via Zoom on Wednesday evenings at 7 PM. Participate in the group as often as you can.



LENT/EASTER BELL CHOIR ENSEMBLE

We are planning to ring bells in a safe, socially distant way similar to how we did at Christmas. If you would like to participate, please let Maya Caron know at 14mcaron@gmail.com. Maya will direct the bell ensemble. This is the perfect time to try out bells!

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

With a new year, we have a new Sunday School program, Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation. This is a 12-week curriculum that focuses on Bible stories that celebrate water, plants, food, and animals. It is designed to draw children into conversation with biblical stories that relate to these elements of God's creation. Each lesson highlights a particular biblical story and provides opportunities to focus on hearing and reflecting on the story with open-ended questions, creating meaningful art, sharing in an interactive activity based on the story, and providing an opportunity to share God's love.

Week One was recorded from the Rhine Falls in Switzerland where we talked about God creating the earth, sky and sea as told in the book of Genesis. Week Two we discussed Moses and the parting of the Red Sea and had a cool little science experiment. Week Three was brought to you from the Susquehanna River as we delved into the baptism of Jesus. Week

Four we discussed rain and storms!

In February, we will begin the plant and food stories up to Valentine's Day and then we will shift from the Illustrated Earth program to focus on Lent with a special family-oriented program called Lent for Families: Reflections on the Heart. This program begins on Ash Wednesday and includes weekly devotions, activities, and coloring pages for families to use during Lent. As we journey through this season of Lent together, families are invited to focus intentionally on the spiritual discipline of evaluating what the heart treasures. Some are physical treasures we can touch, hold, store, and give. Some treasures are invisible, yet still greatly matter and guide our lives. By exploring Gospel passages about treasures and matters of the heart, families will reflect on what kind of treasure matters to us, why we store treasures, and the power these treasures have in our lives.



The Christian Education Committee continues to monitor and discuss the current status of the pandemic and what is the best way moving forward. We have decided to keep the flexibility available for families to participate as schedules allow. We miss seeing everyone but with the introduction of some other fun online activities, we will continue to bring the children and families of St. Paul's quality programs.

Thank you for your continued support, generosity and thoughtfulness.

Stacy Heinemann
Youth Leader



Stacy discussing the week's lesson from the Susquehanna River.

WHERE TO FIND ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES



Find us on our [St. Paul's website](https://www.saintpauls-ucc.org/) (<https://www.saintpauls-ucc.org/>) under the Resources link



Click on our St. Paul's [Sunday School Playlist](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivb7jku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ) in St. Paul's [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivb7jku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivb7jku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ)



Access to the youth programs and other information and resources can be found in our [Facebook group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulskidsand-teens): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulskidsand-teens>

FEBRUARY



BIRTHDAYS

- 2/3 Nancy Mercer
Tara Spriggle
Laura Strawser
Norah Witkop
- 2/4 Barbara Reed
- 2/5 Nathan Bingaman
- 2/6 James Radel, Jr.
- 2/7 Christopher Feiler
Lamar Henise
Ruthann Troup
- 2/8 Natalie Imhoof
Sophia Lybarger
Darlene Newman
- 2/10 Joe Dubaskas, Jr.
Susan Henise
- 2/12 Robert Rice
- 2/14 Tracey Wolfe
- 2/15 Michael Aurand
Cheryl Gibson-Doyne
- 2/16 Lucille Cope
Ann Rising
- 2/17 Fritz Heinemann
Tom Peeler
- 2/19 Heidi Beaver
- 2/21 Matthew Bingaman
- 2/22 Jeanette Dressler
Ronan McCabe
Raven Rudnitsky
- 2/24 Michele DeMary
- 2/25 Judi Anselmo
Carol Dickinson
Gene Houck
- 2/26 Stephanie Burd
Pam Gemberling
Blake Haddon
- 2/28 Shelly Myers
Jamie Shambach



ANNIVERSARIES

- 2/01 Penny Dollar & Archie
Passmore
Courtney & Joshua Hanes
- 2/13 Rick & Susan Krex
Derick & Jamie Shambach
- 2/14 Kathy & Fred Ulrich
- 2/22 Kim & Steve Campbell

PRAYER LIST

Members:

Al & Dot Deans
Ethel Foor
Helen Hannah

Friends:

Susan Belotti
Art Bowen
Ian Danner
Don and Jane Harnum
Jennifer Kelly
Wanda Lapatina
Ginny Lloyd
Joe Namet
The family of Steve Pontius

Dale Reichenbach

Becky Steffen

Dan & Lori Weir

Parents and children affected by
Covid-19

All who lost their jobs

All who keep working in critical situa-
tions, especially the health care workers

Those who live in abusive relationships

All who are grieving

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.

I just want everyone at St. Paul's to know how grateful my parents and I are for the wonderful DVDs of the church services. We really enjoy and appreciate them. The Christmas Eve service was beautiful and inspiring. We especially loved the Christmas Pageant. Thank you to everyone who participated to make such an

amazing production! It was spectacular! Thank you for bringing so much joy and comfort to everyone in these trying times. God bless you all, as you are a blessing to us.

Sincerely,

Carol Miller, Charles and Dolly Klingler

To Bill and Linda, Pastor Dietmar, Randy, Mike and Jeannette, Joe Erdley, and others who have been so kind to send cards and call me when my husband died. Thank you for all the uplifting messages, the prayers for comfort and healing. Grieving is so very hard. I appreciate all

the kindness extended to me. I certainly gained many good friends at St. Paul's and enjoyed working at the food bank. I treasure all of you.

Thank you kindly!

Love, Maddy Walter

To Mike Proger:

Thank you, thank you, Mike, for the wonderful, practical huts you created for Loaves and Fishes. They are great, just what we needed to keep this vital ministry going safely through the winter months. You care so deeply and give so

much of yourself. I am very thankful and express our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of St. Paul's, the local families we serve, and personally! You are the best!

Pastor Dietmar

LOAVES AND FISHES

Happy 2021! Thank you to all our volunteers and supporters of Loaves and Fishes food bank for your generosity in 2020. We are planning and acting on measures to continue curbside pickup through the Winter months and beyond. We are working on constructing portable wooden structures (we lovingly refer to these as huts!) to provide volunteers a warm space to work outside. We are also utilizing both bays of the garage to keep volunteers warmer. I wholeheartedly appreciate all the monetary donations

to Loaves and Fishes. With the additional funding we received along with our yearly budget we are doing extremely well financially. I would like to suggest that anyone considering gifting us this year to consider other non-profits in our community that may have a greater need. Meals for Seals, SACC Ministry and Martha's Table are a few that come to mind. Again, thank you one and all!

Randy Tanner



Loaves and Fishes volunteers carrying bags of food to clients' cars.



HOLY VESSELS: A LENTEN SEASON OF RECOVERY



Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 17, we will focus in worship on how we can experience healing and wholeness in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been through a harrowing time since last Lent that has shattered our sense of wholeness – body, spirit, mind, and soul – like a glass vessel shattered into pieces. In this Lenten “season of recovery” for our physical, communal, emo-

tional, mental, intellectual, and environmental health, we will explore the healing narratives of Jesus that tell of God’s compassion with human suffering and remind us that we can begin a journey toward creating beauty from that which is broken. Beach glass offers us a multifaceted symbol of this transformative process towards healing and wholeness.

St. Paul's Council Meeting January 12, 2021

In Attendance: Joanne Lauer, Pastor Dietmar, Raven Rudnitsky, Bev Heinemann, Robert Engel, Marty Blessing, Richard Campbell, Jack Lewis, Peggy Peeler, Bill Hockenbrock, Kathy Ulrich, Ivana Lluveras, Amy Caron, Shane Sanders, Sara Adams, Linda Turner, Susan Bolig, Sigrid Plajer.

Excused: Stacy Heinemann, Michael Zettlemoyer.

Minutes – A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from December 8th. The motion was approved.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the minutes from the Annual Meeting from December 13th. The motion was approved.

Financial Report – Bill Hockenbrock reported. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial report. The motion was approved.

The incoming and current Council Members introduced themselves to each other.

Elections:

Council President: Susan Bolig has accepted the position of Council President.

Vice President: Marty Blessing has accepted the position of Council Vice President.

Secretary: Shane Sanders has accepted the position of Council Secretary.

Committee Liaison Persons – Every committee gets assigned a council member as liaison person. The role of the liaison person is to communicate to Council the activities of the respective committee and to communicate back to the committee Council's deliberations and decisions. We need a liaison for each committee from Council.

Liaisons are:

Linda Turner – Stewardship and Finance Committee.

Michael Zettlemoyer – Music Committee.

Marty Blessing – Personnel Committee.

Linda Turner will serve on the Personnel Committee.

Sara Adams – Christian Ed Committee.

Shane Sanders – Church Growth and Membership.

Committee Support – We need someone for this committee.

Jack Lewis – Kitchen Committee.

Peggy Peeler – Green Team.

Bev Heinemann – Worship Committee.

Bev Heinemann – Ministry Committee.

Rick Campbell – Property and Grounds Committee.

Bob Engel – Archive Committee.

Financial Report for "Beloved, Love!" Stewardship Program – Bill Hockenbrock reported. The information concerning the amount of money that was committed through the giving cards will be announced at the next meeting. Currently it is about \$15,000 less than it was last year. The cards can't be depended on in the creation of the budget.

Pastor's Report – Bill Hockenbrock has done all the financial reports himself. From January on, Donna Long is supposed to do the reports again.

December was an amazing month in all that we accomplished and with giving. We had the many services and the pageant. Thank you to everyone for making it possible. Blue Christmas was unique and well received.

Unfinished and New Business:

1. What is St. Paul's vision? – We do so many ministries and so much wonderful work. In all that we do as wonderful as it is, it would be important to have a target to where we are moving. We would like a group of people to spearhead this movement and how we can best discern a vision. We could have interviews with people, what has been important to them in the last ten years. Who are our neighbors? What are their spiritual

longings and our desires? We should be moving forward, be in motion. The pandemic makes things difficult at the moment. We have short term goals with the pandemic. When we get back to normal, we can concentrate more on our future goals.

2. The Pastor gaining access to giving records – The most important point for Pastor Dietmar is about having transparency. He is supposed to be made aware of extraordinary gifts in order to thank them. No one else is thanking people for gifts. He can also check on people with hardships and challenging situations in their lives. It is a sacred trust from him that he wouldn't treat people differently. A motion was made and seconded to let Pastor Dietmar have access to the giving information. This access is tied to Pastor Dietmar and would be revisited if another pastor were to come. The motion was approved.

3. Worship in person, via internet and by phone – People felt very safe there on Sunday. It was stated that the services are done so well. People commented that they liked going to church, but also viewing from home. We will continue doing online services. People can watch on vacation, in the hospital and from other locations.

Sigrid reported on her duties accomplished. Sue, who is in the office, will do prayer partner issuance. Pastor Dietmar suggested that we follow the CDC guidelines for the church services.

4. "God Cares for Me" Messy Church, January 17, 4 PM – Sign up for it if you wish to participate. It will last an hour, and we will distribute bags with the needed materials.

5. Adult Sunday school with "NOOMA" and other video conversations – It is going well. It could be shortened to an hour. However, it is hard to limit the

St. Paul's Council Meeting January 12, 2021 cont'd

class to an hour with more than a few people attending and being part of the discussion. Raven does a very good job of facilitating. We can let Raven know our feedback.

The Mixed Adult Class meets once a month on the phone only. It is hard to communicate on the phone.

6. Children and Youth Ministry – This topic will be reported on at the next meeting.

7. Pastor Parish Relations Team – We need one more person to serve. The purpose of the Pastor Parish Relations Team is to enhance the relationship between the pastor and the congregation, to “grease the organizational machine,” to facilitate when challenges arise, and to work towards mutual understanding

and appreciation. Council members will suggest people to serve on this team. It will then be a joint decision with the pastor.

8. Need two persons to serve on Stewardship and Finance – Linda Turner and Michael Zettlemoyer will serve on this committee.

9. Church Roof Repair – Rick Campbell reports that there are other big property items to address: renovating the alley side of the church, replacing windows on the office wing, the furnace, and exploring the future of the bridal store. They want to have a meeting to see if we want the roofer do the roof in the winter. Solar panels are on the back burner. Some of the windows have large cracks created from installing them. Options will be

looked at for this repair.

10. Visitation Ministry Coordinator – The search is ongoing. We will keep looking.

11. Leadership Orientation, Jan. 24, 31, or Feb. 7, 3-4 PM – One of the dates will be chosen. The purpose is to learn about and understand how we function as a congregation and leadership team. It will last one hour. It would be a Zoom meeting.

Next Council Meeting: February 9, 7 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Lauer, Recording Secretary

FROM THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT

I am grateful to be part of St Paul's church and serve as the President of Church Council for 2021. We have a great group of people on our Council who are committed to serving God and making the best decisions for the future of St Paul's. Please feel free to email me at slb725@hotmail.com or leave a message at the church office, (570) 374-8749, if you have any questions, concerns, or great ideas for St Paul's.

2020 has certainly been a difficult and challenging year for all of us. With my work hours cut drastically, I had to choose to find new things to keep me busy like painting my fence, walking our dog, Bella (which was great exercise for both of us) and learn to do virtual schooling with my son. I hope and pray this year will bring hope and inspiration to all of you with new ideas, adventures and connecting with each other. On New Years Day, I heard the song “Joy” by King and Country, a Christian pop duo. I read about this music duo and wanted to share with you their thoughts behind writing this song. “The lyrics talk about breaking a cycle and injecting positivity into life. Pause and see the joy in human connection and interaction. There's a real beauty

in diversity and different opinions. If we can be open and free about it, that's where the joy is.” Luke and Joel Smallbone

These are the chorus lyrics:

“Gotta get that fire, fire, back in my bones
Before my heart, heart, turns into stone
So somebody please pass the megaphone
I'll shout it on the count of three
One, two, three
Oh, hear my prayer tonight, I'm singing to the sky
Give me strength to raise my voice, let me testify
Oh, hear my prayer tonight, 'cause this is do or die
The time has come to make a choice
And I choose joy
Let it move you, let it move, let it move you
Yeah, I choose joy
Let it move you, let it move, let it move you”

Many Blessings,
Susan Bolig

Pastor's Report - December 2020

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

What an amazing Advent and Christmas season we celebrated! In spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has been a moving and meaningful season of focusing on God's light which shines into the darkness.

The "Do Not Be Afraid" Christmas Pageant was a highlight on Sunday, Dec. 20. A great thank you to all characters, children and families who participated in making it extra special. Also, Youth Leader, Stacy Heinemann, assistant, Joanne Lauer, and video editor and "composer" Sigrid Plajer gave it their best!

The Advent and Christmas Music was heartwarming. The Christmas Bell Ensemble under the leadership of Amy Caron lifted everybody's spirits. The Senior Choir's "Let the Earth Resound with Joy" filled our hearts. The special compositions of Jaime Namminga and presentation with Susquehanna University music faculty colleagues were amazing. Our pianists offered their best. Both, Carolyn Patton and Jaime Namminga excelled. What would our worship services be without music?

We added a special Blue Christmas worship service on the evening of Dec. 20 with the theme, "When Christmas Hurts: Acknowledging our Loss and Pain." Many are grieving during the Christmas sea-

son and this year in particular it affected so many more due to Covid-19.

I met again with the members of the Mixed Adult Sunday school class formerly led by Richard Wagner on December 21 via Zoom conference call. The group members were deeply grateful to connect with each other as a group.

During our Annual Meeting on December 13, we welcomed five new Council members for the 2021-2023 term: Sara Adams, Amy Caron, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, and Michael Zettlemyer. What a great team they make together with our current council. We also adopted the 2021 Mission Plan.

It took an extra effort to create the pre-recorded Christmas Eve worship service this year. Thank you to all who contributed to make it extra special.

On behalf of St. Paul's and personally, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Marv Rudnitsky and Bill Hockenbrock (Stewardship and Finance Chair) for applying for and receiving funding for St. Paul's: \$44,700 from the Payroll Protection Program and a \$20,000 grant through Snyder County. These funds helped us make it through a very challenging year.

The Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry continues its vital work facing the challenges of Covid-19. It takes extra effort, organization, and volunteers to accomplish the curbside pickup for

those who are in need. A great thank you to the coordinator, Randy Tanner, and all helpers who make this possible.

I continue to provide pastoral care for people who are facing life-altering challenges, contribute to the monthly "The Messenger" newsletter, coordinate the work of committees, support staff, write for the weekly eNews, contribute to the Card and Care Ministry, write notes, meet with colleagues, etc.

On December 7, Neil Beaver, the father of Jevan Beaver, died. I officiated a service for Neil and the family on December 15. I was touched to witness the outpouring of love and care for the Beaver family.

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.

December 1-31, 2020	
Days worked	17.5
Days off	03.5
Continuing Education	02
Vacation days	05
Holidays	02
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer

WE WELCOME NEW COUNCIL LEADERSHIP



Please join me in welcoming our three new leaders on Church Council, who have been elected to their new positions: Susan Bolig (Council President, on the left), Marty Blessing (Vice President, on the right) and Shane

Sanders (Secretary, center). On behalf of the congregation and personally, thank you for sharing yourself and your gifts, energy, and time in service to God and to our common ministries. We promise to honor you and your leadership, lift

you up in prayer, and support you as we listen to and follow Jesus together.

Pastor Dietmar

CARD AND CARE MINISTRY - THANK YOU!

“

If you ever faced a challenging situation yourself, experienced a tragic loss, or were hospitalized, you know what it feels like and that prayers and a caring card from St. Paul's can lift your spirits and assure you of God's healing presence.

”

Every week a group of deeply caring and dedicated persons write caring notes and cards to people who are facing serious challenges in their lives. We give special consideration to send those persons a card, who are being newly added to our church prayer list. If you ever faced a challenging situation yourself, experienced a tragic loss, or were hospitalized, you know what it feels like and that prayers and a caring card from St. Paul's can lift your spirits and assure you of God's healing presence.

I am deeply grateful to all those who currently participate in our Card and Care Ministry: (Beverly Heine-mann, Caroline Kissinger, Carolyn Fairl, Carolyn Patton, Helen Hannah, Jane Taylor, Linda Bowers, Linda Turner, Margaret Weirick, Penny, Raven Rudnitsky, Suzan Beasley). Your prayers, your love, and your caring notes make a world of a difference!

We are looking for two more persons to join our Card and Care Ministry team. If you want to write a

card once per week or once every other week to someone who is facing a hardship in their life, please connect with our Office Manager, Sue Nentwig at office@saintpauls-ucc.org or (570) 374-8749. She can provide you information on how this ministry works.

Thank you for all your prayers, love, and caring you extend!

Faithfully,

Pastor Dietmar



St. Paul's United Church of Christ
an Open and Affirming congregation

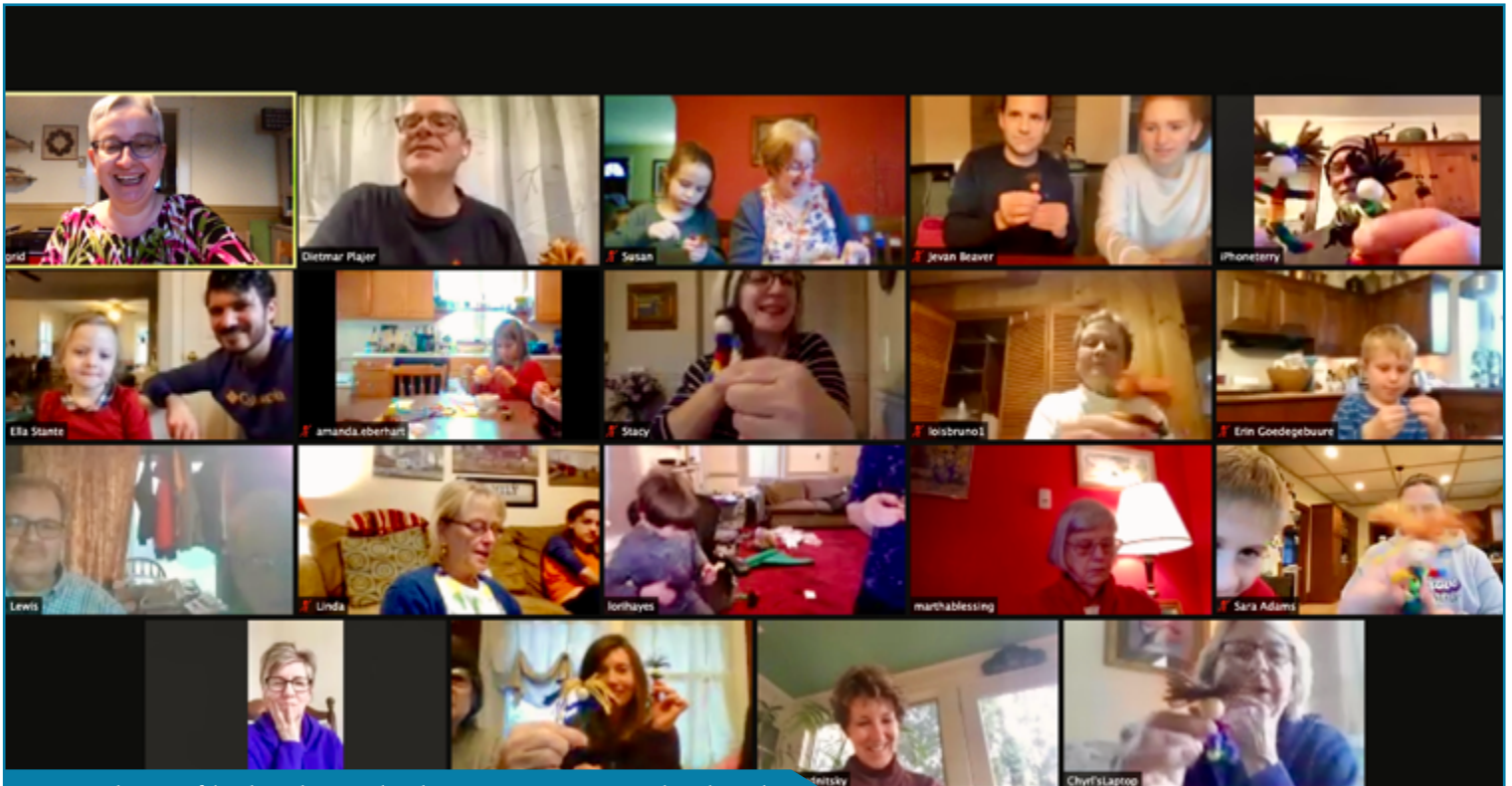
400 North Market Street
Selinsgrove, PA 17870
Tel 570-374-8749
office@saintpauls-ucc.org
www.saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:00 AM
either on Facebook or our website

“God is Still Speaking”

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...



We created prayer friends and prayer beads at our January Messy Church, and we played Pictionary on Zoom. Join us for the fun in February!