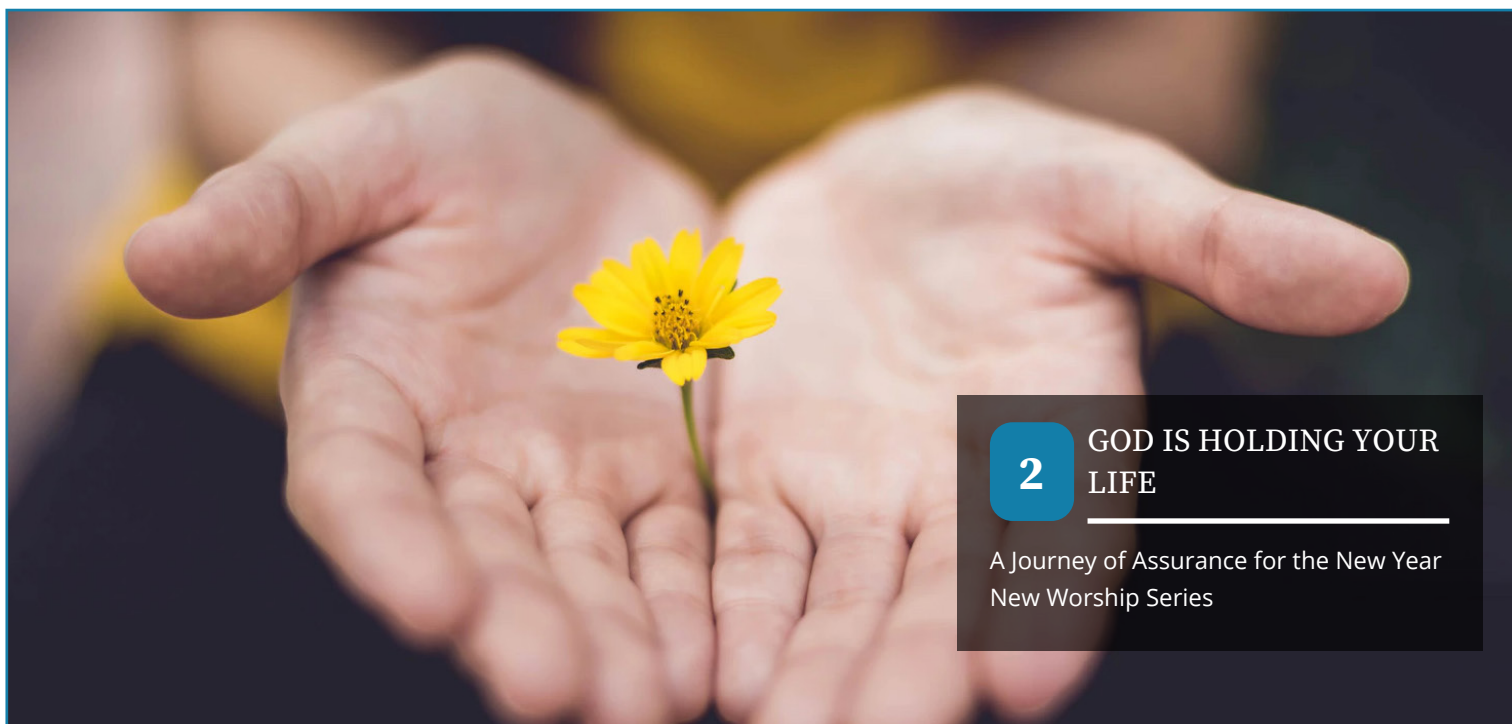




THE MESSENGER

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



2

GOD IS HOLDING YOUR
LIFE

A Journey of Assurance for the New Year
New Worship Series



3

JANUARY 17 AT 4 PM
VIA ZOOM

Sign up by January 10 through our web-
site to reserve your craft kit!

GRATITUDE AND HOPE

I'm looking back and I'm looking forward as we transition to a new year 2021. Looking back, I think, "Thank God, it's over!" It has been frustrating and exhausting. It has been confining and limiting. And it has been very sad. Yet also, looking back, I'm counting blessings and am filled with gratitude.

In and through the challenges St. Paul's people have been incredibly creative, adaptive, and determined to rise to the occasion. From day one of local Covid restrictions we had a live-stream going, thanks to our terrific tech team, Jean Beaver and Sigrid Plajer. We had an amazing virtual VBS over five weeks, thanks to Youth Leader Stacy Heine-mann. Our Senior Choir offered amazing virtual productions, thanks to Amy Caron. Sunday school explores matters

of faith and life via Zoom, thanks to Raven Rudnitsky. Our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry continues every month, thanks to Randy Tanner and all the amazing volunteers.

More than I can express, I am moved by your commitment, dedication, and generosity in furthering God's work through St. Paul's mission and ministries. Your many acts of kindness and service made a huge difference! I am touched by how you, the good people and friends of St. Paul's, came through, loving, praying, caring, writing notes, calling people, giving where others could not, and serving. In and through you I can see the very heart of God!

As I am looking toward the New Year, I am filled with hope, because I know that

God is good and God provides, and that you, the wonderful people of St. Paul's will continue to be the hands, hearts, and feet of Jesus in action. Will it be easy? No. It is never going to be easy if you take God's work and God's call seriously. But it is always going to be worth it. When you invest your gifts, time, and energy for the right cause and for the right reasons, there will always be something coming back. Blessings boomerang.

I entrust you and your loved ones in God's care and know in faith that you are with God in good hands and that God is holding your life!

Blessings,

Pastor Dietmar



“GOD IS HOLDING YOUR LIFE: A JOURNEY OF ASSURANCE FOR THE NEW YEAR”

Life is a series of exclamations from “Oh No!” to “Help!” to “Oh Yeah!” We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. There are also seasons of our lives when we feel inundated with more of one than the others. As we enter the new year, we had hoped we would be past the “O No!” of the last several months. Instead we find ourselves with ongoing prayers for “Help!” The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time

from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry and prayers of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust and even give our thankful “Oh Yeah!” because God is, indeed, holding our lives. Join us for meaningful and memorable worship services where you are invited to experience that God is holding your life, too.

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS



Happy New Year! As we ring in 2021, I would like to once again express my thanks to all who helped bring our Christmas Pageant to life! It was a wonderful, yet challenging experience and I couldn't be more thrilled with the end result! My deepest gratitude goes out to Joanne

Lauer and Sigrid Plajer - without their special talents, this project would not have been as great as it was.

Beginning on January 10th, a new Sunday school video series will begin. An Illustrated Earth: Celebrating God's Creation 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, shar-

ing in an interactive activity based on the story, and providing an opportunity to share God's love.

The Christian Education Committee continues to monitor and discuss the current status of the pandemic and what the best way moving forward is. 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 attempt to bring the children of St. Paul's quality programs.

Thank you for your continued support. May the New Year bring you all happiness, love and health.

Stacy Heinemann
Youth Leader

ZOOM MESSY CHURCH, JANUARY 17 AT 4 PM



We invite you to participate in our January Messy Church program via Zoom. We will focus on how God cares for you, for me, and for all of us. We don't need

craft relates to the "God Cares For Me" theme. When we gather online we will share about our lives, have some fun crafting together, listen to the Bible story

“

Throw all your anxiety onto God, because God cares about you. 1 Peter 5:7

to worry! Sign up through our website by January 10 to reserve your craft kit that we will deliver to you. The

this theme is based on, and do a scavenger hunt. Our Zoom Messy Church will be less than an hour long and fun for the whole family. Messy Church is for people of all ages. Join us as we explore faith in fun, crafty, and interactive ways. Invite someone you know to take part in our January 17, 4 PM Zoom Messy Church.

The Messy Church Team



Amy Caron - Congratulations on 15 Years of Excelling Music Ministry



On behalf of St. Paul's, our church leadership, the Senior Choir, and personally, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Amy Caron for an amazing 15 years of service as St. Paul's Senior Choir director and church musician! Amy Caron has contributed in significant ways beyond directing. She coordinates the work of the various musicians of St. Paul's. She orders music, invites area musicians to share their special gifts and talents, and in so many ways shares her gifts and talents with us all as soloist, pianist, and by singing in and directing various ensembles. Much of the work is not visible. A lot of time and energy goes into planning, ordering music, working with accompanists, finding substitutes, acknowledging musical

contributions, rehearsing with narrators, finding musical contributions for the summer, etc. In recent months, Amy took on additional responsibilities in getting our Senior Choir members to sing virtually by recording each voice separately. To our great delight, Amy embraced the opportunity to direct a Christmas Bell Ensemble which brought great Advent and Christmas joy to all of us. Amy Caron excels as director and musician and brings out the best in all of us. Thank God for Amy Caron and for her 15 years of faithful and dedicated service! And a heartfelt and great thank you to Amy Caron on behalf of all of us.

Pastor Dietmar



Christmas Ministry



The 2020 Christmas Ministry of St. Paul's UCC provided 14 families with food including 34 children who were given \$50 Boscov's gift cards. With the effort of Rachael Rice, children were also given

toys through the Toys for Tots Campaign. In total 54 people were served through the generosity of the congregation of St. Paul's. Thanks to all.

Donnell Kelly



Thank you, Rachael Rice, for serving for many years as chair, organizer, and hard worker of the Fellowship Committee. Through the years you planned for many hayrides, block parties, picnics, birthday parties, and other fellowship events. You have a special gift for organizing, planning, and for getting

things ready and done well. And you shared yourself and your gifts freely with St. Paul's. On behalf of St. Paul's, our church leadership and all those who participated in the special events you planned for, a great and heartfelt thank you!

Blessings, Pastor Dietmar

PRAYER LIST

Members:

The Jevan Beaver family
 Ray Benner
 Al & Dot Deans
 Ethel Foor
 Helen Hannah
 Dick Marshall
 Ann Rising
 Anna Mary Wetzel

Friends:

Kathy Bartol
 Tana Bingaman
 The family of Helen Brouse
 Darrell & Kathy DeMar
 Barbara Hoover and family
 The family of Phyllis Houtz
 Dolly and Jerry Hughes

The family of Amber McCardle
 Christa Plajer
 John Soper
 Pam Wildt & family
 Kevin and Cindy Woodruff
 Parents and children affected by Covid-19
 All who lost their jobs
 All who keep working in critical situations, 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, government, leaders of the world, those who are working for peace and understanding, and all the children of the world.

Dearest Members of Church Council, Worship Committee, Christian Education, Plajer Family, and Members of St. Paul's UCC,
 The Sunshine Basket was a beautiful gift to bring light to our grieving hearts. We were so surprised by the outreach of love and kindness. It should have come as no surprise considering the caring

hearts St. Paul's possessess. Everywhere you look are signs of loving generosity. We are so appreciative of the emails, text messages, and phone calls of love and support. May God bless you as you have blessed us.

The Beaver Family

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

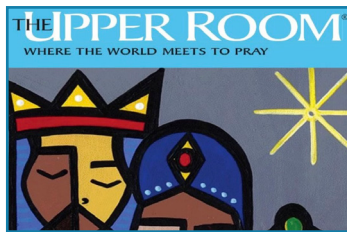


- 1/01 Jaime Namminga
- 1/02 Hailey Beaver
- 1/05 Ryan Bolig
Peggy Doak
Allen Wetzel
- 1/06 Jim Forster
Kay Moffatt
- 1/07 Shelly Wolfe
- 1/09 Barry Hayhurst
- 1/10 Charles Dahlmann
- 1/11 Max Leitzel
Derrick Mercer
- 1/12 Raymond Adams
Andrew (Andy) Snyder
- 1/13 Rachael Kelly
- 1/14 Nancy Leitzel
- 1/15 Charles Ruhl
- 1/16 Isabel Proger
- 1/17 Felix Plajer
- 1/18 Kaley Long
Judith Lyon
- 1/19 Cerene Dubaskas
Paige Spoons
- 1/20 Debra Martello
William Proger
- 1/21 Theodore (Teddy) Derk
Michelle Siegel
- 1/22 David Hannah
Zachary Stark
- 1/23 Victoria Stark
- 1/24 Melissa Bingaman
Leon Fetterolf
- 1/25 June Straub
- 1/26 Maddison Burd
Morgan Lewis, Jr.
Nancy Wagner
- 1/27 Sue Minier
Jenelle Moyer
- 1/29 Lon Deitrick
Cheryl Reddinger
- 1/30 Christine Beaver
David Imhoof
Caroline Kissinger
- 1/31 Charlotte Barben
Terry Beaver
Dakota Brosius
Ella Hanes
Jan Riegel

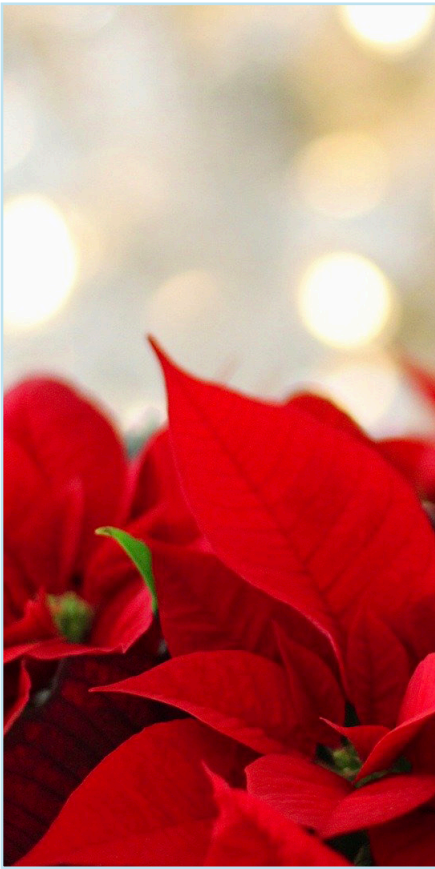
JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES



- 1/01 Michele DeMary & Lee Fortier
Michael & Jeanette Dressler
Bruce & Flo Hummel
- 1/02 Jason & Dione Mercer
- 1/07 Carol & Robert "Bob" Drumheiser
- 1/08 Susan & Michael Bolig
- 1/11 Michael & Melissa Bingaman
- 1/12 Ellen & Nick Berger
- 1/15 Craig & Shelly Myers
- 1/25 Norm & Jean Golden



Pick up your "Upper Room" Devotional - We have the January - February devotionals available for you in regular and large print versions. You can pick them up at the church, Tuesday to Thursday, 9-2, right inside the Mill St. door on the umbrella rack. If you cannot pick up your copy, please call the church office at 570-374-8749 and we will deliver or mail it to you. If you know of someone else who could benefit from this devotional, please let the church office know.



2020 POINSETTIA CONTRIBUTIONS

Poinsettias Presented by:

The Lewis Family in memory of Morgan Lewis, Sr.
Carolyn Fairl in memory of Bill Fairl
Sally Lauer in memory of Norman Lauer
Jevan & Christine Beaver
Deb & Terry Burns in memory of Marjorie Burns
Ray Benner & family in memory of Betsy Benner
Caroline & family in memory of Jerry Kissinger

Contributions to Bethany Children's Home by:

The Plajer Family in honor of our sons
Patricia Gordon in memory of David Troutman
Caroline, Debra & Mike in memory of our Pamela & Marcus
Mary Bartlett in memory of Louis Bartlett
LaMar & Sue Henise in memory of Stanley, Georgina & Judy Wagner
Barbara & Jack Lewis in memory of parents, Ruth & Joe Lewis

Contributions to an American Indian Congregation by:

Bill & Mary Ann Weader in honor of our children & grandchildren
Bill & Mary Ann Weader in memory of Tom & Kate Valunas and Mike & Kippy Weader
David & Helen Hannah in memory of William & Leonore Hannah and Bob & Betty Noll

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

On behalf of St. Paul's, our church leadership and personally, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Marv Rudnitsky and to Bill Hockenbrock (Finance Chair) for their diligent and extensive work in acquiring St. Paul's funds from the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) in the amount of \$44,700 early last year and gaining us a Covid related grant from Snyder County for \$20,000 in December. Due to Covid and all its impact, 2020 has been a very challenging year financially. I don't know what we would have done without the grant and PPP funding. Thank you, Marv and Bill, for always having the best interest of our congregation at heart and for investing your time and energy for funding for our vital and vibrant ministries!

Thank You Outgoing Council Members

On behalf of all of us at St. Paul's and the many whom we reach through our ministries, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the five council members who served so dedicatedly and diligently for the last years and whose term comes to an end: Carolyn Fairl, John Fischer, Lisa Krex, Joanne Lauer, and Raven Rudnitsky. Together we faced incredible challenges for most of 2020 due to the Covid crisis. You rose to the occasion. You went above and beyond in your commitment to serve. You shared yourself and your gifts beautifully and generously. Thank you for your faithful service!

Pastor Dietmar

A heartfelt thank you to all of you for the kind and loving care you extended to Alvah and Dot Deans. Alvah continues to care for his dear wife Dot in their home while he experiences significant health concerns, too. Alvah is deeply moved by the expressions of love, your prayers, and the tangible reminders that God cares. The cards you sent brightened the Deans' lives. The prayers you offered lifted their spirits. In and through your loving concerns Alvah and Dot feel the living God close by. On behalf of Alvah and Dot Dean, Thank You!

St. Paul's Council Meeting December 8, 2020

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

Minutes – A motion was made to approve the minutes. The motion was approved.

Financial Report – A motion was made to approve the financial report. The motion was approved.

Pastor's Report – We are looking at the creation of some sort of shelter for Loaves and Fishes for the winter months, because a safe distribution needs to be outdoors. We are delighted to have the bells perform this year. The Mixed Adult Class had a conference call in Zoom. Many of them don't have technology, so they loved being together again via the phone. There is a lot of energy going into Christmas planning. There will be a Blue Christmas for those for whom Christmas is painful. There will be a recording made of the Christmas Eve service to stream on Christmas Eve. Please share the invitation to come to the online services. The pageant will be all virtual for the 20th. The Blue Christmas service is the 20th at 7 PM. All of Christmas Eve will be recorded ahead of time, so that there will be DVDs available.

Welcome Council Candidates for 2021-2023 Term – Sara Adams, Amy Caron, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, Michael Zettlemoyer. Each candidate introduced him/herself.

Unfinished Business:

Worship in person, via internet and by phone – Covid cases are rising. A discussion was had concerning whether or not

we should do online only services due to the rise in Covid cases.

Sigrid is working on the pageant. A lot of credit to Stacy for getting people to submit their parts. Joanne helped with the directing. Sigrid is also doing the virtual choir piece and creating the Christmas Eve recording. Please participate in Joy to the World, which will be the congregation singing together. Go to our website and click on the link to listen to the music and sing along and record. We have four people who listen by phone every week. DVDs for regular services are also available. We will have the Christmas Eve service available during Christmas week. We need to know how many to make.

"Beloved, Love!" Stewardship Program – The presentation was good. If you need a giving card, contact Sue in the office for one.

Roof repair and solar panels – There are no current updates.

Stewardship and Finance needs two new persons to serve – No new members have been acquired at this time.

Who will serve on Pastor Parish Relations team – Someone will be approached about serving after the votes from Council are considered.

Adult Sunday School with Nooma videos – We have about 18 or so joining each Wednesday. We are doing Nooma and hot topics.

Children's Sunday School/Youth Ministry – The Beatitudes lessons are done. We have videos for Advent and crafts to accompany them. The Pageant is coming along well. We have a Christmas tree at the Gelnet Library. Stacy was on the news reading the story that our tree represents, and our tree got highlighted by WNEP. The book is Maddie's Fridge. We can vote for the tree. We are front and center in the library by the door. We have a ton of food donations for the

tree and to put underneath it. There are written messages on the tree with food insecurity facts. The food will go to the community afterwards.

"When Christmas Hurts; Acknowledging our Loss and Pain" – Blue Christmas Worship will be streamed on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 7 PM.

Visitation Ministry Coordinator – The search is still ongoing.

New Business:

Covid grant – A great big thank you to Marv Rudnitsky and Bill Hockenbrock for acquiring \$20,000 in Covid grant money for St. Paul's.

Beginning with January 1, 2021, Pastor Dietmar will have access to the giving information. This was discussed at Stewardship and Finance. Many other pastors have access to this information. He doesn't want to treat people differently. Sometimes giving reflects home finance issues or health issues and can let him know how to connect with people better. He can let people know that what they do really makes a difference.

Vacation Pastor Dietmar – The pastor will take vacation time from Dec 27th to Dec 31st. There are still 4 days of Continuing Education left for 2020. A motion was made and approved to allow the vacation time and to carry the 4 Continuing Education days to the 2021 year.

List of envelope people – Council members will distribute the remaining envelopes to the congregation members who have not yet picked them up.

Fellowship Committee – Rachel Rice is resigning from the Fellowship Committee. We will need a Fellowship Committee after the pandemic is over.

Recommendation from Stewardship and Finance – A motion was made and approved to move \$1525.77 from the checking account to the Messy Church dedicated funds.

Next Meeting – January 12th

A great big thank you to the outgoing council members: Carolyn Fairl, John Fis-

cher, Lisa Krex, Joanne Lauer, and Raven Rudnitsky.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Lauer, Recording Secretary

Pastor's Report November 2020

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

"Beloved, love!" was the theme of our stewardship program this year. I invested much time and energy with planning, writing, and coordinating the program. We grow in faith and make God's work through St. Paul's possible when we become more giving people. Thank you for your personal sharing and support of the program. Thank you to Sally Lauer and Bob Engel for sharing personally in worship about why they give. And thank you to all those who provided written statements on why St. Paul's matters to you and why you support our vital ministries. I am grateful for your continuing support of God's work through St. Paul's mission and ministries!

We observed All Saints Sunday on Nov. 1, celebrating the lives and legacy of those members and friends of St. Paul's who passed away during the last year. We focussed in worship on those "heroes" and saints who inspired us through their lives and actions. Again, the worship team decorated the sanctuary to perfection.

I am grateful that we had a Christmas Bell Ensemble gather in November to rehearse and record simple handbell music for the Advent and Christmas season. Thank you to Amy Caron for her leadership and for all those who stepped in to share their gifts and talents with us. It's amazing what is possible when we come together to worship and serve. And it's fun, too!

Again this year, together with SACC

(The Selinsgrove Area Christian Council) we served about 125 local families with amazing Thanksgiving food baskets (banana-boxes) on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Every family received a frozen turkey with all the trimmings. The Kitchen Cupboard contributed food items to make these great food basket gifts complete. Lori and Dan Weir (from Wesley UMC) and Marcia and Jerry Labant (from St. Pius X Catholic Church) coordinate the overall ministry and Donnell and Fred Kelly participate in St. Paul's aspect of the work.

Messy Church and the Children and Youth Ministry coordinated their efforts to reach all those children and families who participate in Children's Sunday School, Kids Group, and in Messy Church to provide them with "Advent in a Bag." It contained an illustrated Advent devotional with crafts and coloring pages, a make-your-own Christmas tree ornament, an advent calendar (for children) or something sweet (for adults) all in a St. Paul's Messy Church bag. Thank you to Sigrid Plajer and Stacy Heinemann for coordinating their efforts to reach all those engaged in these programs.

It is a huge production to create our monthly "The Messenger" newsletter. Our Media, Technology, and Communications Coordinator makes that possible. I contribute with writing and coordination and our Office Manager mails about 60 print copies to those who can not receive it electronically.

We sent off Ethel Foor to her new assisted living "home" in Elizabethtown with a blessing in worship on November

15. It was a delight to have three of her daughters present, Cindy, Chris Gaugler, Corinne Kern. It was moving to experience through recent years how Ethel found her way back home to St. Paul's.

Pat Namet died very unexpectedly on October 30. Husband Dan and children, Peter and Becky, are grieving deeply. The family decided to postpone the memorial service to keep everyone safe due to the Covid-19 crisis. Jim Kauffman died of the Coronavirus on November 12 at the Richfield Healthcare and Rehabilitation facility. I officiated at his gravesite funeral service on November 17.

Rev. Darin Namminga filled in for me by leading the worship service and delivering the message on November 29, the First Sunday in Advent. I am very grateful for his partnership in ministry!

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.

November 1-30, 2020

Days worked	16
Days off	02
Continuing Education	02
Vacation Days	09
Holidays	01
Total Days	30

Respectfully submitted,

Pastor Dietmar Plajer



SCENES AND PARTICIPANTS FROM OUR VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT





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...



Members of St. Paul's are singing "Joy to the World" for our Christmas Eve service.