

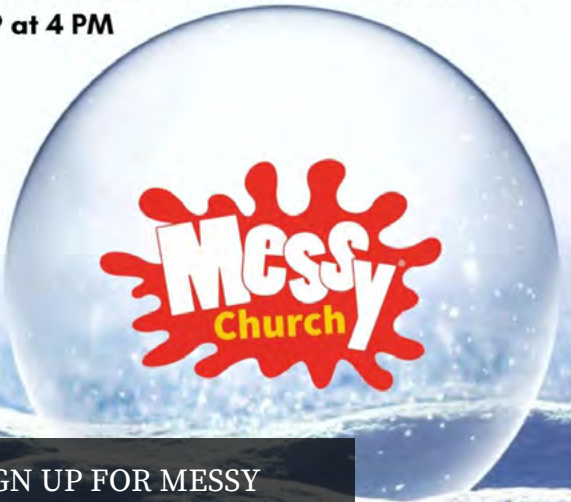


# THE MESSENGER

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

## THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

January 9 at 4 PM



03

### SIGN UP FOR MESSY CHURCH

Come to Messy Church on January 9 at 4 PM! Sign up at [saintpauls-ucc.org](http://saintpauls-ucc.org).



## DRAWN IN

LIVING CREATIVELY

WORSHIP SERIES FOR 2022

07

### NEW WORSHIP SERIES BEGINS IN JANUARY

God's creative energy inspires, renews, and motivates us.



11

### BECOME A PRAYER PARTNER

Sign up at [saintpauls-ucc.org](http://saintpauls-ucc.org) to be paired up with a prayer partner for 2022.



11

### ZOOM STUDY GROUP THURSDAYS AT 7 PM

Join our study group in mid January with a focus on racial justice.

# HOW TO FACE 2022



What a year 2021 has been! We made it through the second year of the pandemic. We faced huge challenges. We adapted. We counted losses. And we keep pressing forward with ministries that touch and change people's lives. More than ever, faith matters. Grounded in God, we do not face the storms alone.

God's people have faced challenges throughout history. Our Biblical stories remind us of that. It's good to know that we are not on our own. We can learn from these experiences and have them guide us through the coming year.

After Moses freed God's people from their torturous slavery in Egypt, they faced the wilderness, needing to traverse the desert. They were stuck in an endless arid area. "Are we there yet?" they asked. It took them 40 years to make it through. They looked back often at the good old days in Egypt and wished they were back there. They were starving and running out of water in the desert. But God was

faithful and came through, sustaining them by providing manna, quails, and water.

It was the vision of God's promised land that kept them going, the land of milk and honey. And their faith, trusting that God would be with them, guiding them and providing for them.

It is God's vision and our faith that keep us going. God's vision as described by Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." I hope you trust that promise and know it in your bones: God is out to bless you and to sustain you and us together.

Two Jesus stories touch me, the one of Peter sinking and the one of the disciples in a boat engulfed by a storm. Looking at the waves, Peter gets scared, starts sinking, afraid to drown. It can feel like sinking to have to deal with so much

these days... Jesus reaches for Peter and pulls him up and out of the water. Have faith, trust! That is the message of this passage. Jesus is there to calm the storm, when you feel overwhelmed and like drowning. He reaches for you!

What will 2022 bring? We do not know specifics. But we know we are not facing it alone. God is faithful. When we lean in, trust, surrender in a positive way, God will provide. That's who God is. That's what faith is about! We hold on to God's promise, follow God's vision, and walk by faith.

When we do that, 2022 will become a great year; a year of blessings; a year of faith in the midst of challenges; a year of hope in spite of losses; a year of love in and through the storms.

I find this haiku which I received from dear friends, very meaningful for our transition into the New Year:

Seeds of renewal,  
Frozen awaiting release,  
Freed by fire of hope.

Yours in faith, hope, and love,

*Pastor Dietmar*

“

"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

”

## KIDS GROUP

Kids Group will resume after the holidays on Wednesday, January 5 from 3:30 - 5:15. During Advent, we made angel ornaments out of coffee filters, sculpted nativity scenes out of clay, and made star ornaments out of clothespins while learning about and preparing for the birth of Jesus. If you have a child in grades K-5 who enjoys crafts and building faith with friends, they are welcome to join us!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL



Sunday School will resume after the holidays on Sunday, January 9. During Advent, we made advent wreaths, St. Nicholas ornaments, and a Christmas tree card with Bi-

ble verses of the stories we learned inside. We welcome all children grades K-5 and parents/grandparents, too!



## MESSY CHURCH JANUARY 9 AT 4 PM

We invite you to our January Messy Church, where we will learn about the parable of the lost coin. The woman who lost the coin searched everywhere for it and when she found it, she celebrated. When someone who's lost their way finds their way back, there is much joy.

We will make a coin pouch, see how much water fits on a penny, make coin rubbings of interesting coins, play with indoor snowballs, make snowflakes, snow globes, and snowmen. All that snow is just for fun. Please let us know that you're coming so we can have enough supplies prepared for you. Hope to see you on January 9 at 4 PM!



# 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  
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 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  
1/28 Marley Showers  
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  
Pat Snook

# PRAYER LIST

## Members:

Al & Dot Deans  
David & Helen Hannah  
Kim Haizlett  
Charlie McCuen  
Jane Taylor  
Kathy Ulrich

## Friends:

Dakota Brosius  
Jan Garinger  
Mona Gillespie  
Dennis McNally  
Charity & Dan Ney  
Tunde & Anna Ogunnaike  
Edythe Sonder & the Seebold/O'Brien

families  
Linda Waite  
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 NOTES

*We received this Thank You note from Dan Namet's sister, Bonnie Glowatski:*

Pastor Dietmar, my brother Dan, and all the people in St. Paul's church, Thank you all for the prayers and your concern. Prayers are everything. It was a rough time in our life, but we did get through it. Francis is doing good now. He is still going to cardiac rehab twice a week, which is really helping him get stronger. He'll be going to rehab till sometime in February. Best wishes to all of you!

God bless you all,  
Francis & Bonnie Glowatski

Dear Pastor Dietmar, choir, technicians, and all who make the Sunday service a blessing to all of us at home across the country. Thank you! We are truly blessed to be able to participate in the wonderful Sunday services every week.

Love to All,  
Janet Stephens



# THANK YOU NOTES

To the Angels at St. Paul's,

Dave and I want to thank you for the yummy meals all of you sent to us. The chicken pot pie was so favorable, it was hard to stop eating it. Thank goodness I was able to get 2 extra meals from that one container. The lasagna was so large we were able to invite my brother and sister-in-law to stay for dinner the day they came to help us with numerous household chores. Also they put up our Christmas tree and decorated the higher areas. There was lasagna left over for another meal, too.

We are astounded by the love, support, calls, cards, visits, and prayers we have received over the past several months. It has truly helped us get through some dark times. Our church family will always have a special place in our hearts.

Thank you again and God Bless You All,  
Helen & Dave Hannah

## JANUARY

### ANNIVERSARIES

- 1/01 Michele DeMary & Lee Fortier  
Michael & Jeanette Dressler  
Bruce & Flo Hummel
- 1/02 Jason & Dione Mercer
- 1/07 Carol & 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



### Loaves and Fishes

#### October

Total Families 53  
Children 23  
Adults 43  
Seniors 54

Total served 120



### Loaves and Fishes

#### November

Total families 62  
Children 32  
Adults 58  
Seniors 52

Total served 142

### Loaves and Fishes

#### December

Total families 74  
Children 37  
Adults 71  
Seniors 66

Total served 174



## UPPER ROOM JANUARY/ FEBRUARY

You can pick up the January-February Upper Room devotional at the church, Tuesday to Thursday, 9-2, right inside the Mill St. door. If you cannot pick up your copy, please call the church office at 570-374-8749.

# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING - DECEMBER 14, 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, Rick Campbell, Amy Caron, Bob Engel, Beverly Heinemann, Jack Lewis, Ivana Lluveras, Peggy Peeler, Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Sigrid Plajer, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, Kathy Ulrich.

**New Council Members:** Craig Stark, Randy Tanner, Josh Wenrich, Allen Wetzell.

**Excused:** Kimmie Burkhart, Stacy Heinemann, Michael Zettle-moyer.

**Minutes from November Council meeting:** A motion was made by Jack Lewis and seconded by Linda Turner to approve the minutes from November. The motion was approved.

**Minutes from December Annual Church Meeting:** A motion was made by Bob Engel and seconded by Beverley Heinemann to approve the minutes from the Annual Church Meeting. The motion was approved.

**Financial Report:** Linda Turner reported, presenting the financial reports from November, which were sent to the Council ahead of time. Jack made the motion to accept the financial report as read, Bob seconded it and the motion was passed.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Dietmar sent his report to the Council members ahead of time and thanked those who are supporting all the amazing ministries going on right now. He expressed his concerns for our homebound members, stressing the importance of the ability to connect with them, including through being able to call in to listen to the service.

## **Unfinished Business & New Business:**

- **Christmas Eve Offering - Giving to others in our community and outreach:** Council members responded to a survey to choose recipients of the Christmas Eve offering. The top 3 organizations that were voted for were Haven Ministries (13 votes), Transitions (12 votes) & By Grace (11 votes). The offering will be split evenly between the three.
- **Christmas Greeting with Service Opportunities post-cards:** A big thanks to the Senior Choir who worked to get all of those mailed out to members and the wider community.

## • **Personnel Committee:**

- Resignation letter from Courtney Hanes, Treasurer. Bob Engel moved to accept Courtney's resignation and search for a new treasurer, Rick Campbell seconded it, and the motion was approved.
- The nursery attendant would like an extra hour for prep time for Sunday mornings. Rick Campbell made a motion that she be paid for an hour of preparation. Peggy Peeler seconded and the motion was passed.
- Julie Long is stepping down as Children's Choir Director. Sara Adams moved to accept Julie's resignation and search for a new children's choir director, Beverly Heinemann seconded, and the motion was approved. Pastor Dietmar suggested that we publish the opening in the Friday eNews and on Facebook.
- **December Messy Church:** Lovely group and crafts. It was nice to have a craft that was not taken home, but specifically for giving away at Loaves & Fishes.
- **Can the Media, Technology, Communication Coordinator (MTCC), currently Sigrid Plajer, participate in the Council meetings (as a non-voting guest)?** Our MTCC does communications via website, weekly eNews, monthly newsletter, social media, etc. The MTCC would be better informed and better able to communicate. Linda made a motion to approve the participation of the MTCC in Council meetings as a non-voting guest, with the invitation to attend to be added to the job description. Bob Engel seconded it, and the motion was approved.
- **Worship Service:** We will continue to follow CDC guidelines. The question of bulletins was discussed – some ideas about QR code bulletins is being explored.
- **Worship in person, via internet and by phone: How can we improve? How is Tech Team with volunteers going?** Sigrid Plajer reported: Things are continuing as planned. We have some very dedicated volunteers and that helps a lot. Things are going well. We are now streaming to YouTube as well, so people can subscribe to the YouTube page and receive an email when we go live.
- **January Worship Series:** Pastor Dietmar is considering two different themes, and the series will be announced in the January newsletter.
- **Adult Sunday School classes:** Marty shared that it's a good series that's going well.
- **Kids Group & Children's Sunday School:** Torri Stark does a great job. This last Sunday there were 8 kids! She was very appreciative to have a parent volunteer helping on

Sunday.

- **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 committee members for a time that the first meeting can take place in January.
- **Pastor Dietmar requesting Continuing Education/Vacation for Dec. 26-31:** Rev. Darin Namminga will lead worship on Dec. 26. Linda made a motion to approve the request, Rick seconded, and the motion was approved.
- **New Council Leadership for 2022:** Please think and pray about it. We need a new president, vice president, and secretary - to be decided at our January 11, 2022, meeting.

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

- **Christian Ed**
- **Worship Committee**
- **Property and Grounds:** Rick Campbell reported. The rear alley enclosures and stairs are being investigated. This project is many months down the road. The natural gas boiler "main heat source " for the church will soon have informa-

tion going out to contractors to give bids on replacement costs. They are looking into installing a side door ring tone and buzzer/intercom/video system for the basement when people are meeting downstairs, and the office is closed so that the door can stay locked. Linda Turner motioned to accept S&F's recommendation of a video system, Bob Engel seconded, and the motion was approved.

Susan Bolig also presented the idea of updating the nativity out front for next year's season. The idea of finding or making a new nativity was discussed and it's something we'll be looking into.

**Thank you to the outgoing council members** for their 3-year commitment- Marty Blessing, Rick Campbell, Stacy Heineman, Jack Lewis, and Susan Bolig.

**Next council Meeting:** Tuesday, January 11th, 2022 @ 7pm. Bob Engel will provide devotions.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shane Sanders, Council Secretary



**"Drawn In: Living Creatively"** is the theme of our new worship series. We will explore together how we can face challenges creatively with childlike imagination and joy. Right from the beginning, the Bible describes God as creator. God's creative energy inspires, renews, and motivates us to connect with our creativity to become co-creators with God. We will explore how to re-connect with our God-given energy, joy, and childlike playfulness in order to make this world a better place for all. You will learn how to live creatively into 2022.

# PASTOR'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2021

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

We observed All Saints Sunday on October 7, remembering our loved ones and those who shaped our faith through their love, members and friends of St. Paul's who died during the last year, and the "cloud of witnesses" that surrounds us always. The worship team decorated the sanctuary for the occasion. The remembrance with votives and white roses is deeply meaningful.

We concluded our "Learning to Pray" worship series and transitioned into our "Rooted in Love - Love Flows" stewardship program exploring where and how our love flows and how we open up and give way for God's love to flow through us. The stewardship materials were skillfully designed to highlight the core ministries of St. Paul's. I am grateful to all who shared personally, who participated in the program, and who made a giving commitment for 2022.

Thanksgiving was the focus of our November 14 Messy Church program. Children, families, and adults explore faith in fun ways every second Sunday of the month at 4 PM. Among the many crafts and activities, this month the participants decorated little pumpkins and

cards to share with others. To keep everyone safe, we hand out goodie bags instead of providing a sit-down meal. Dries Orchards donated apples for everyone.

Embracing an Alternative Orthodoxy is the theme of the group study which Raven Rudnitsky facilitates on Thursday evenings via Zoom. A group of about 12 persons watches a segment of a DVD course by Richard Rohr and explores how his new perspectives apply to our lives and to us as a community of faith. The study is interesting, challenging, and life-giving. It helps all participants broaden their minds, explore new perspectives, and grow in faith. Thanks to Raven and to all who participate!

The Property and Grounds Committee is making progress on planning for two major projects: Exploring a new furnace and renovating the concrete and entrances from the alley and backside into the downstairs fellowship hall. On All Saints Sunday we were almost without heat. The aging furnace needs to be replaced. I am grateful to all on Property and Grounds and specifically for their fearless and faithful leader and chairperson, Mike Proger.

I continue to visit with people in their homes and beyond as much as the pan-

demical allows me to do safely. I am concerned especially about those members and friends of St. Paul's who are homebound and do not have electronic access to our church services and programs. Many feel lonely, depressed, anxious, frustrated, and exhausted.

I continue to lead the Selinsgrove Ministerium and participate in the Central Association Ministerium and a UCC clergy support group. It is good to know that we are together in this as we share with one another and support each other.

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, 2021

Days worked	19
Days off	08
Continuing Education	00
Vacation days	00
Holidays	01
Total Days	30

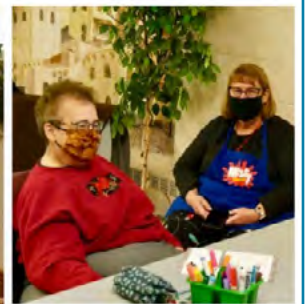
Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Dietmar

The SACC Christmas Food Basket Distribution was held on Saturday, December 18, at St. Paul's Church. Many needy local families were served including 10 families supported through St. Paul's. Children under 18 years of age of these 10 families received \$40 Boscov's gift cards. Toys for these same children were provided through Rachael Rice through the Marine Corps Toys for Tots program. Thanks to all who contributed funds which make the purchase of gift cards possible.

Donnell Kelly







December 2021



# 2021 POINSETTIA CONTRIBUTIONS

## **Poinsettias Presented by:**

Lisa Krex in memory of my mother, Janet  
Caroline Kissinger, Mike, & Debra in memory of Jerry, Pam, & Marcus  
Fritz & Beverly Heinemann in memory of Catherine Kohl & Thelma Cramer  
Carolyn Fairl in memory of Bill Fairl  
Sara Adams & Morgan Lewis, Jr. in memory of Morgan Lewis, Sr.  
Pat & Lois Bruno in memory of Michael & Kippy Weader and Pat & Helen Bruno  
Joanne Lauer in honor of my children: Stefanie, Maria, & David  
Margaret Weirick in memory of Bruce & Cornelia Weirick  
Leon Fetterolf in honor of Mary  
Leon Fetterolf in memory of Carol  
Raven Rudnitsky in honor of Marv for all he does for our family, our church, and our community  
The children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren in honor of Charles & Dolly Klingler  
Barb Stanke in memory of LaVerne James Stanke  
Raven & Marv Rudnitsky in memory of all the volunteers who contributed to St. Paul's ministries and in honor of those who continue the work  
Kathy & Larry Smith in memory of our parents: Verna & Dick Kenner and Ruth & Lawrence Smith  
Raven & Marv Rudnitsky in memory of family members who taught us about God's unconditional love for us all



## **Contributions to Bethany Children's Home by:**

Charlotte Barben & Susan Harman in memory of Edward S. Barben  
Raven & Marv Rudnitsky in honor of our grandchildren: Owen, Theo, Chris, Maya, Eve, and Bode who fill our days with laughter and fun  
Barry & Janet Siegfried in memory of Milton & Laurene Inch  
Ann Rising in memory of Bob Rising  
LaMar & Sue Henise in memory of Stanley, Georgina & Judy Wagner

## **Contributions to an American Indian Congregation by:**

Ray Benner and family in memory of Betsy Benner  
Raven & Marv Rudnitsky in honor of our daughters: Kelly, Amy, & Kimmie who continue to be a joy  
Raven & Marv Rudnitsky in honor of our sons-in-law: Steve, Brian, & Bruce who add so much to our family

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# HARTMAN CENTER HAS BEEN SOLD

For many years, Hartman Center, the UCC Penn Central Conference church camp and retreat center in Milroy, PA, has been a wonderful place for outdoor and retreat ministries of the conference. Many members and friends of St. Paul's participated in camps and retreat events there.

In recent years, Hartman Center became impossible to sustain financially. That is why the conference sold the camp. The closing was on Monday, De-

ember 20. With the proceeds from the sale, \$1,100,000, the conference established the "Outdoor Ministries and Programming Investment Fund" for distribution of the money for outdoor ministry activities.

The new owners from Tyrone, PA, intend to add RV sites and plan to also offer the facility to the public for conferences, weddings, and retreat-like events.

We are grateful to all who participated

and supported Hartman Center for many years. It has been a place of inspiration and faith formation for many. The seeds of faith that have been planted there in the hearts of many continue to grow and bear fruit.

Our conference will continue to offer similar and new camp and retreat opportunities in God's wonderful creation in cooperation with the Lutheran Camping Association.

# LIVING INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS

Before the pandemic hit, we made great progress as a congregation toward becoming more sustainable. The Green Team has done wonderful work in moving us towards that goal in cooperation with the Property and Grounds team. We will resume our future-oriented work of creation justice and creation care in 2022. We will expand the mission and ministry to include living into right relationships with LGBTQ+ and BIPOC persons. BIPOC stands for black, indigenous, and people of color. In January, a new "Living Into Right Relationships"

(LRR) team will begin its work. LRR is intended to function as an umbrella team which will coordinate the work of the Green Team, LGBTQ+ advocacy, conversations on ethnicity and racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and the like. LRR will start with a focus on learning and education. The team is planning to offer educational events like the Hot Topic Discussions we used to have. We are planning to build relationships with community organizations that align with St. Paul's mission and ministries. We invite you to consider joining a wonderful

team of persons who, motivated by their faith, want to lead us as a congregation to become more like God intended us to be. Currently committed to serve on the LLR are Marty Blessing, Rev. Darin Namminga, Peggy Peeler, Raven Rudnitsky, Shane Sanders, Randy Tanner, Linda Turner, and Pastor Dietmar. Please indicate your interest in LLR to Shane Sanders at [shaneSanders@gmail.com](mailto:shaneSanders@gmail.com) or by calling the church office. Thank you!

## BECOME A PRAYER PARTNER



Everyone is invited to participate in this thoughtful exercise of faith and love. We encourage every household to become a part of the beautiful exchange of loving thoughts. Here's how it works:

Fill out the Prayer Partner form and place it in the box in the narthex by Sunday, January 16, 2022 or complete the online form at [saintpauls-ucc.org](http://saintpauls-ucc.org). Each person who filled out a form will be assigned a name. This person is your Prayer

Partner for 2022.

Please remember that it only requires a card or note every now and then and on special occasions (especially the person's birthday) to let them know they are being thought of in prayer. You simply sign your card or note to whoever it is with the words "Your Prayer Partner" and St. Paul's return address. Then, next Christmastime make known to that person your identity with a small gift.

## ZOOM STUDY GROUP THURSDAYS AT 7 PM

We invite you to participate in the Zoom Study Group which Raven Rudnitsky will be leading on Thursday evenings beginning with January 13 at 7 PM. This weekly study group of people interested in exploring faith from new perspectives is based on a DVD curriculum. After watching together a 20-30 minute DVD online, we engage in meaningful conversations. This group is a wonderful opportunity to grow in faith. With questions and to indicate your interest in participating, you can contact the church office at [office@saintpauls-ucc.org](mailto:office@saintpauls-ucc.org) or by calling (570) 374-8749.





## St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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[office@saintpauls-ucc.org](mailto:office@saintpauls-ucc.org)

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

Worship Sunday at 10:00 AM in person,  
on Facebook, YouTube, or our website

“God is Still Speaking”

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...



Scenes from our Christmas pageant from December 19.