



# THE MESSENGER

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

**Heavenly Hope**

March 12 at 4 p.m.

**Messy Church**

**2** **LOOKING FOR LOVE**

New worship series for Lent began on February 26.

**5** **VISIONING MEETING MARCH 19**

We will continue the visioning process on Sunday, March 19, right after church.

**MEET & EAT**

Sunday, March 26 after worship



## WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING FOR LASTING LOVE?

Our new Lenten worship series, “Looking for Love” inspires and encourages us to look for the love that Jesus and God provide. For all too often, we are looking for love in all the wrong places. Food cannot satisfy the hunger of our soul. Shopping can not satisfy the longing of our hearts. What can? Based on scriptures, we explore in worship on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. where and how Jesus meets us in our longing and hunger for meaning. We feed our bodies quite well. But often, our souls are starving for purpose and meaning. How do we find what truly satisfies? We find meaning and purpose in the heart-and-soul connection with Jesus, the source of life. That’s why we worship, to grow in faith and in our relationship with the living God. I ask you to make our worship services a priority. They are life changing! They feed our souls. We all need a lift.

We will continue our Visioning and Strategic Planning process on Sunday, March 19 right after our worship service. Please note the separate article in this newsletter describing the accomplishments from our session with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call. There is so much positive energy and excitement about our ministries and potential. We are a vital congregation. Together, we

are the hands and hearts of Jesus in action. We need you and we want you to create the most faithful and vibrant congregation we can be.



We feed our bodies quite well. But often, our souls are starving for purpose and meaning. How do we find what truly satisfies? We find meaning and purpose in the heart-and-soul connection with Jesus, the source of life.



I can’t wait for our first ever “Meet and Eat” gathering after worship on Sunday, March 26. Many of us are longing to connect more deeply with one another. What better way to do that than over a home-cooked meal. Please mark your calendars and join us for worship and a luncheon in our fellowship hall right after the worship service. I’m looking forward to some tasty crock-pot dishes. I’m grateful to Peggy Peeler, Chris Jaegers, and Beverly Heinemann for spearheading

this effort!

You see, great things are happening at St. Paul’s! We invite you, yes YOU, to participate. We want you to be part of our beloved community of faith, where we serve, laugh, eat, play, grieve, pray and celebrate together. If you are not yet involved or engaged, I hope to see you soon. There is no better time to adjust your priorities and your schedule than during Lent.

Yours,

*Pastor Dietmar*



# FROM TORRI, OUR YOUTH LEADER



## KIDS NIGHT OUT

The February Kids Night Out was a great success - many thanks to Marty Blessing for helping! The March KNO will be on Saturday, March 4 from 5:30 - 7:30, and Jesus feeding the 5,000 will be the story. Please sign up [here](#) by Friday, March 3. Hope to see you there!



## SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School meets every week after the Children's Message even on communion Sundays. All children in grades K-6 are invited to attend, and parents/guardians are always welcome to join us!



## TEEN GROUP

Teen Group meets on the fourth Sunday of every month from 5:30 - 7:30 pm. It is open to all teens in grades 6 - 12 and friends are welcome to join us! In March, the topic will be "If Jesus was God, why did He have to die?" Hope to see you on March 26th!



# MARCH

## BIRTHDAYS

- 3/02 Luke Lybarger  
Kara Taylor
- 3/03 Gabrielle Kelly
- 3/04 Linda Adams  
Bill Bowen  
Jim Campbell
- 3/05 Dan Namet
- 3/07 Sigrid Plajer
- 3/08 Courtney Hanes  
Max Plajer
- 3/09 Craig Myers  
Mia Forbes
- 3/10 Cassidy Alvieri
- 3/11 Karen Athey  
Rachael Rice
- 3/12 Scott Bernstein  
Alexander Siegel
- 3/13 Lucas Beaver  
Kelly Feiler
- 3/16 Jennifer Bernstein  
Marty Rhoads
- 3/19 Leslie Imhoof  
Eric Witkop
- 3/21 Joanne Lauer
- 3/22 Amy Caron  
Karen Morton
- 3/23 Kathy Ulrich
- 3/24 Craig Stark
- 3/25 Parker Derr  
Quinn Hoot Kranzel  
Katelynn Sola?
- 3/26 Erin Reed  
Molly Snyder  
Jeffrey Taylor
- 3/27 Zachary Hanes
- 3/28 Bode Burkhart  
Laurie Derr
- 3/29 Joan Wagner
- 3/30 Justin Smith  
William Weader, IV
- 3/31 Debra Smith  
Margaret Weirick

## ANNIVERSARIES

- 3/12 David & Leslie Imhoof
- 3/16 Bill & Chris Burd
- 3/17 Jim & Linda Forster
- 3/25 Bill & Linda Bowers
- 3/26 Bob & Rachael Rice

# PRAYER LIST

Lois Bruno  
The Family of Floyd Campbell  
Dena  
Jill & Derrick Adair & Family  
Kelly & Daniel Adair  
Ellen Miller  
Anna Ogunnaike  
Konrad Plajer  
Buddy & Lela Strawser  
The Family of Madelyn Valunas

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  
Those who are dear and close to our hearts and those not named above  
The people of Ukraine and all those suffering from the raging war

# THANK YOU NOTES

### From Bethany Children's Home

Bethany Children's Home provides a safe haven for youth to heal from their pasts and prepare for their futures! Thank you for your gift of \$410 to OCWM through the Penn Central Conference. Through your special gifts, we can provide each youth an opportunity to receive educa-

tional support/enrichment, music therapy, arts and recreation, therapeutic services and a caring, structured environment to live within. Thank you for helping our youth heal from the past, live in the present, and dream for the future!

Carolyn Schultz Spano, Director of Development

### From the Regional Engagement Center (REC)

Things we are proud of - over 65 youth at the still FREE Drop-In Program each day - with our partners, we provide mental health check-ins for youth that attend Drop-In - 50 boxes of food distributed in January - intergenerational programming for summer camp 2023 (with youth already signed up!) - we provide a safe and

supervised place for the youth of Snyder County during out of school times. Your incredibly generous and empowering gift of \$1,000.00 to the REC through your Christmas Eve Service collection will go directly toward funding our programs. I thank you, am so grateful, and will make you proud!

Kelly Feiler, President, Board of Directors

### Thank you from Haven Ministry

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff, and Clients of Haven Ministry, I would like to thank you for your interest and very generous donation in the amount of \$1,000 to our shelter. I feel blessed to be in the position of Executive Director and I am amazed at God's grace. With the help of generous donations and community

support, we are currently housing, feeding, and clothing area individuals and families, as well as supplying emergency food to those in need. I welcome you to visit Haven for a tour of the facility and witness what good stewards we are with your gifts.

Sincerely, Christy M. Zeigler, Executive Director



We will continue the visioning process on Sunday, March 19 right after church.

## "FOR OUR FUTURE" VISIONING AND PLANNING

A group of 20 members and friends of St. Paul's met on Thursday, March 23 at 7 PM (in person and via Zoom) for a visioning and strategic planning session with our UCC Penn Central Conference minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call. It was a lively experience where we focussed on our strengths and effective ministries. We are a vital and vibrant congregation! We gathered a long list of strengths! You can find them all listed on our website at [saintpauls-ucc.org/visioning](http://saintpauls-ucc.org/visioning) and via our church office.

The group of 20 identified four vision elements that we can focus on in the coming years:

- Passionate Engagement,
- Authentic Welcome,
- Spiritual Growth, and
- Faithful Service.

Together, we did work on breaking down these large vision elements into achievable goals and objectives - like accomplishing some easy "one-and-done" service projects in the category of Passionate Engagement. We could expand on our Authentic Welcome by offering something tangible on Sunday mornings in addition to our warm and heartfelt handshakes. In the category of Spiritual Growth, we identified the need for additional staff (full-time or part-time associate pastor). Also, we explored how members and friends might be able to share special experiences in the newsletter.

All who participated in this visioning event are excited to continue. We invite you, the members and friends of St. Paul's to join us in

the visioning and strategic planning. It's amazing how much we accomplished in one session and how many doable goals and objectives we captured.

We will continue the visioning process on Sunday, March 19 right after worship.

On Tuesday, April 11 at 7 p.m. Rev. Dr. Carrie Call will join us again for the next strategic planning session.

We ask you to participate in these planning sessions. They are promising, energizing, and productive.

I'm so very grateful that we are together in this, partners in service and in planning for the future of our beloved St. Paul's.

Pastor Dietmar

## LOAVES AND FISHES

### December 2022

Total families 81  
Children 39  
Adults 73  
Seniors 79  
Total served 191


### January 2023

Total families 86  
Children 35  
Adults 69  
Seniors 93  
Total served 197

### February 2023

Total families 95  
Children 39  
Adults 82  
Seniors 95  
Total served 216





### Easter Flowers

The Worship Committee is planning to have a flower garden display for Easter Sunday. Plants may be ordered through the church office by Wednesday, March 22. Please include a check or cash with your order. Orders received after that date will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The following is a list of plants available and prices. Please indicate number of each plant. Plants may be picked up after the 10:00 AM Easter Worship Service.

How many of each plant

<input type="checkbox"/>	Easter Lily	\$16 each
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hyacinth	\$11 each
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tulip	\$11 each

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_  
In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

## ORDER EASTER FLOWERS BY MARCH 22

The Worship Committee is planning to have a flower garden display for Easter Sunday. You can order using this [online form](#) or the paper form included in your newsletter. Alternatively, you can support Hoffman Homes for Youth, which is a UCC-affiliated residential program for children, by purchasing a non-lily in memory or honor of someone. A list of donors will be included in the next newsletter.

# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 14, 2023

*Because of the timing of the newsletter publication, these newsletter minutes are not the official, approved minutes. After the minutes have been approved at the next meeting, the final minutes are available upon request.*

**In Attendance:** Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Sigrid Plajer as guest, Allen Wetzel, Randy Tanner, Linda Turner, Kim Burkhart, Amy Caron, John Fischer, Malcolm Derk, Mary Dahlmann, Michael Zettlemoyer, Shane Sanders, Bev Heinemann as guest.

**Excused:** Sara Adams, Josh Wenrich.

**Personnel Committee:** Bev Heinemann reviewed changes to three job descriptions - Youth Leader (Torri Stark), Messy Church Coordinator (Sigrid Plajer), and Media/Technology/Communications Coordinator (now titled Communications Coordinator) (Sigrid Plajer). She reported Personnel and Stewardship & Finance recommended the changes, along with salary adjustments to reflect the changes in hours worked (both Torri and Sigrid tracked their hours for two months). Individual motions were made and seconded for each position and approved by Council to accept these recommendations. After the presentation, Bev left the meeting.

**Minutes of January Meeting:** The minutes of the January meeting were approved by Council with no changes.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Dietmar highlighted the Youth Ministry, the need for more people to visit the homebound, the need for a Visitation Coordinator, and thanked everyone for their dedication to our church and its ministries.

**Financial Report:** The January Financial Reports were reviewed by Linda Turner, noting that the difference in Cash in the Bank from December is due to the \$247,755.36 for Associate Pastor and Church Ministry being transferred to UC Funds. January was a 5 Sundays, 3 payrolls month, and we ended the month with a deficit of \$10,646.67. A motion was made by Randy Tanner, seconded by Allen Wetzel, and approved by Council, to accept the Financial Report.

**Property and Grounds:** Property & Grounds conducted a walk-through of the property outlining the back stairs (from the balcony of the sanctuary) and stairway from the alley to the fellowship hall repair work that needs to be done. There is much "busted concrete" and water damage from many years. A motion was made by Kim Burkhart, seconded by Mary Dahlmann, and approved by Council to approve Rocky Baer as Architect and the \$11,000 fee. The \$11,000 will be pulled from UC Investment Funds dedicated for Major Repairs.

**Visioning for St. Paul's:** Pastor Dietmar reminded everyone

that our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call will be here on Thursday, February 23rd at 7pm to begin our visioning process. He expects this to be the first of three meetings to develop a 3-5 year plan. Several Council members are not going to be available in person and asked if Zoom or a recording of the session was possible. Pastor Dietmar will follow up with Rev. Call.

**Aplos Accounting Software:** Linda Turner reported that she and Sigrid Plajer have been working with the Aplos software for our accounting needs. Stewardship & Finance were given a short demo of the reports available and recommended that we subscribe to Aplos at the current monthly fee of \$49.50 for the next 12 months (this is a 50% discounted fee). A motion was made by Randy Tanner, seconded by Allen Wetzel, and approved by Council to subscribe to Aplos.

**Church Safety Plan:** Nothing new to report.

**Christmas Eve Offering Distribution:** John reported that distribution of \$1,000 to both REC and Haven Ministries has been made.

**Council Liaison List:** The list was distributed prior to the meeting and changes noted. Linda Turner will make necessary changes and send out.

**New Council Members:** Search continues for new members.

**Visitation Ministry Coordinator:** Position remains open. Pastor Dietmar advised that a lay person, if interested, could fill the position.

**Ash Wednesday:** Ash Wednesday is February 22nd and Pastor Dietmar will, with other pastors in the area, be at the Commons to provide "Ashes to Go."

**Stewardship & Finance:** Jared Roush was recognized as a new member of the committee. John Fischer asked for an update on online banking. Linda Turner reported that the monthly fee is \$9.95 for 15 bill pays, with each bill pay thereafter 75 cents. We will need to change our authorized signatures with the bank to include Linda, as Treasurer, to do the online banking, and also to change authorized signatures to one. Internally, we would still require two signatures on a paper check and would also require that all invoices and payments be approved by a committee chair or member. A motion was made by Allen Wetzel, seconded by Shane Sanders, and approved by Council to move forward with on-line banking, to add Linda Turner as an authorized signature, to change the document at the bank to one authorized signature, and to require internal controls.

**Sunday After Worship Social Gathering:** Pastor Dietmar asked if there was any interest in having a monthly gathering after worship with a light meal and fellowship. Council agreed

# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 14, 2023, CONTINUED

we should try this.

**Communion:** To ensure communion runs smoothly each month, Communion Captains were selected to lead each "class" - Class of 23-Shane Sanders; Class of 24-Allen Wetzel; Class of 25-Malcolm Derk. The Captain will be responsible for ensuring that new members are trained to serve, that communion is set up prior to the service, that at least four people are available to serve, and that the altar/communion table, pews and communion preparation room are cleaned up after the service.

**Other Committee Reports:** Randy Tanner noted that the stove and stack ovens in the kitchen are not working properly and, at times, are needed for Messy Church and Kids Night Out. He said Jack Lewis will be talking to Hobart to service the equipment and also reported that the kitchen needs a thorough cleaning. Randy will discuss this with Mike Proger.

**Right Relations:** Shane Sanders reported that they are planning a Hot Topics presentation March 26 - Environmental Justice - What Your Zip Code Says About Your Health. Shane also reported she is discussing with Dr. Ruth Shaeffer a joint Zoom bible study with a church in NYC using a new First Nations Version of the New Testament. The First Nations Version is a brand-new "translation" from a Native American perspective.

**Next Council Meeting:** March 14, 2023 - in person and Zoom.

**Devotions for next Meeting:** Randy Tanner  
The meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Turner  
Council Secretary

## Welcome to our new treasurer, Linda Turner

At its January meeting, Church Council authorized the hiring of Linda Turner (our current church secretary) as St. Paul's new treasurer. Linda will function in both positions. Linda Turner has much administrative experience and the right attitude. She is diligent, conscientious and will get the job done right! Currently, Linda Turner is learning a new software, Aplos, that has been specifically designed for churches. She is working hard to include all financial transactions from the first of the year. Linda is the right person to make the transition to electronic accounting and online banking. As treasurer, Linda Turner can be reached at treasurer@saintpauls-ucc.org and by calling (570) 374-8749. Please join us in welcoming Linda Turner as treasurer!



## Thank you, Bill Hockenbrock, our outgoing treasurer!

On behalf of St. Paul's, Church Council, and personally, we thank Bill Hockenbrock for his years of serving as St. Paul's treasurer. Bill has been the steady presence through many transitions in recent years. He kept St. Paul's books diligently and helped train several of our previous treasurers. He was always willing and ready to step in when needed and write checks, balance accounts, and provide financial reports accounting for every penny. Thank you, Bill, for your faithful service! We count on your support for our new treasurer, Linda Turner. In gratitude, Pastor Dietmar

# PASTOR'S REPORT - JANUARY 2023

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

"Arise and Shine: How to Face the Winter Blues" is our worship series for the New Year. Sunday by Sunday we focused on practical things we can do to deal with Seasonal and Spiritual Affective Disorder, like talking a walk, listening to music, lightening up, becoming aware of God's presence, etc. The worship team once again decorated the sanctuary in an amazing way. The choirs excel and the pianists lift our spirits. It's a delight to hear Gail Fischer playing the hymns on the organ. I'm deeply grateful to all who provide Children's Messages and function as lectors, greeters, acolytes. Our tech team is amazing! Every worship service is moving and meaningful!

Our Children and Youth Ministries are changing lives. Our Youth Leader, Torri Stark, is a great blessing in how she loves, serves, and brings out the best in the children, youth, and volunteers. Kids Night Out and Sunday school are highlights for children and their parents, and the teen group is an important opportunity for a hard-to-reach age group. Messy Church continues to provide a monthly inter-generational program. Participants of all ages explore a Bible story through crafts, games, activities, and music. A family-style meal is included. I'm deeply

grateful for a wonderful group of helpers/volunteers who support all children and youth ministries. Sigrid Plajer leads the amazing Messy Church Team.

We installed our newest Council members and Council leadership in worship on Jan. 24: Mary Dahlmann, Malcolm Derk, John Fischer (President), Randy Tanner (Vice President), and Linda Turner (Secretary). Also, we hired Linda Turner as new treasurer of the church. We express our heartfelt gratitude to Bill Hockenbrock, who functioned as volunteer treasurer through several times of transition. The outgoing and the new Council Presidents, Peggy Peeler and John Fischer delivered our Christmas Eve offering checks to the Haven Ministries homeless shelter in Sunbury and to the Regional Engagement Center (REC) in Selingsgrove. Both organizations are doing amazing work. Each received a check for \$1,000. Our heartfelt gratitude to all from St. Paul's, members and friends, who gave generously in supporting God's work in our community!

We got our Visitation Ministry Team up and running again after a long hiatus through the pandemic and since Pastor Penny left. I am deeply grateful to those who are visiting people, on a monthly basis, who are homebound and those who are limited in their mobility. We are still looking for people who are willing to

visit one person one time per month and for a Visitation Ministry Coordinator to take Pastor Penny's place. Please spread the word. I continue to visit and support people who are facing life-altering challenges and homebound members and provide home-communion for all who find this meaningful.

A great thank you to Rev. Darin Namminga for filling in for me in leading worship and to Rev. Amelia Price for being available for pastoral care emergencies. I contracted Covid and recovered at home from Jan. 26-30, continuing to minister and serve remotely.

Thank you for your prayers, your witness, your giving, your service, and your faithfulness to God and to God's work through St. Paul's. I see God at work in and through you!

January 1-31, 2022

Days worked	20
Days off	05
Continuing Education	00
Vacation days	00
Sick Days	05
Holidays	01
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



## One Great Hour of Sharing

On March 27, we are receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and flooding have ravaged communities in the United States and worldwide, leaving families and communities in desperate need of assistance. Strengthened by the power of God's Spirit and your col-

lective generosity, the United Church of Christ continues to work with partners to care for others, and not give up... as together we build a just world for all. Thank you for your generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing Special offering! You can give [online](https://saintpauls-ucc.org/give) or at [saintpauls-ucc.org/give](https://saintpauls-ucc.org/give) and by choosing OGHS.





# MESSY CHURCH NEWS

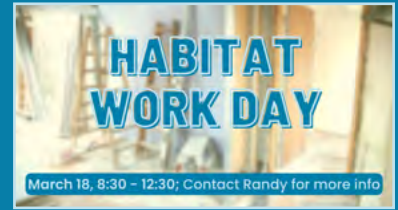
Our next Messy Church will be March 12 at 4 p.m.



How can we make sure we are living life God's way? We will be talking about the beatitudes. They offer hope, even in difficult times. Come and see what Messy Church is all about! We will do fun activities and crafts, a Bible story, and end

with a shared family meal. You can't be too young or too old to join; children need to bring an adult with them. Please sign up [here](#) so we know you're coming and can have everything ready for you!

-Sigrid and the Messy Church Team



## HABITAT WORK DAY MARCH 18

We are planning another date to volunteer at Habitat on March 18 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Sunbury. Anyone interested please contact Randy Tanner or email the church office for more details.



## SELINGROVE HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL MARCH 16, 17, 18

Support our very own Haily Beaver and others from our church and the community! You can buy tickets [online](#).



## SPRING HANDBELL ENSEMBLE

The handbells will ring again this spring! We are beginning rehearsals on March 22. Rehearsals will be held weekly Wednesdays at 6 p.m., and we have performances planned for April 9, April 16, and May 7. Anyone is welcome to join us!



## St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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Tel 570-374-8749

office@saintpauls-ucc.org

saintpauls-ucc.org

**Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM**

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

*"God is Still Speaking"*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

