



THE MESSENGER

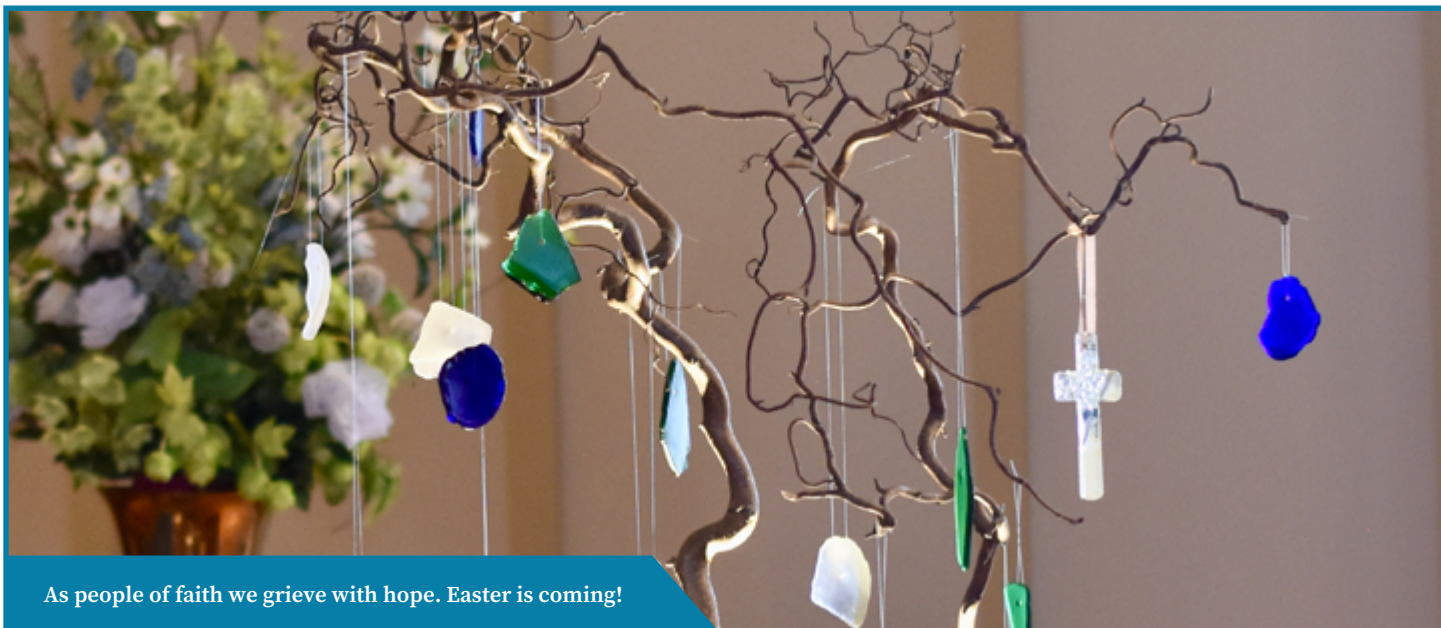
OUR MISSION IS TO GROW IN FAITH, TO WORSHIP GOD, TO SERVE OTHERS, AND TO WELCOME ALL.



HOLY VESSELS NEW WORSHIP SERIES

A Lenten Season of Recovery
Join us every Sunday at 10 AM

FROM SHARDS TO SEA GLASS



As people of faith we grieve with hope. Easter is coming!

How can we experience healing and wholeness in the midst of brokenness and pain? That is our focus during this Lenten Season.

We experienced so much loss and suffering during the whole last year of Covid-19. Friends and loved ones died. We miss them sorely. When someone close to us dies, the pain feels cutting.

Our bodies and souls can go into shock and denial to protect us from overwhelming loss. One may feel numb and withdraw. Another one may feel the cutting, burning, agonizing loss as raw.

Any reaction to deep loss is legitimate and normal. You may feel like hiding under a blanket, trying to withdraw from the pain. Or you may erupt in frustration and anger, wanting to smash something or kick someone.

For a whole Covid-19 year now, we experienced so much of it. We have been in lockdown. Withdrawn. Missing friends and family. Missing to meet in person, to

hug and kiss each other.

Most raw and cutting is the grief and pain about the people who died. No one will bring them back. The loss is heart-breaking!

How do we deal with this grief? Lent is an opportunity to live into it and through it. We can do it alongside Jesus who hurt, suffered, and grieved. The promise is that we are not left to ourselves. We grieve with hope.

The "Holy Vessels: A Season of Recovery" worship series will help us move from grief and pain towards healing and wholeness.

Beach glass is the symbol that represents this process. Like shards, grief and pain can be sharp and cutting. When grace washes over us like the ocean waves over the shards, the sharp edges are sanded off and beauty comes through.

Grief and brokenness can be trans-

formed into beauty.

Join us in worship on Sunday at 10 AM as we move through loss and grief toward recovery.

It helps me to talk with someone as I work through my personal grief of losing my mother. As friends and as people of faith, we can do that for one another. We can be with one another and listen to one another in and thorough the pain.

We can also laugh together, delight in each other as we experience how precious life is.

As people of faith we grieve with hope. Easter is coming!

Have a blessed and meaningful Lent!

Pastor Dietmar

YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

As we moved into the season of Lent, we began a special family-oriented program for Sunday School called Lent for Families: Reflections on the Heart. This program began 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 great-

ly 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 determine the best way of moving forward with youth activities. 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



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/UCivb7j-ku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ) in St. Paul's [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivb7j-ku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCivb7j-ku_rr-Q1yUy92WVcQ)



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



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering - March 7

Please support the UCC One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering which will benefit women and girls (as described below), gain access to clean water. Your gift will make a huge difference. You can give electronically via our website or with your offering envelope/by check. Please mark in memo line, OGHS. Thank you!

Access to clean fresh water is vital for all of humanity, but for women in particular, water access means the difference between life and death for them and their families. The United Nations International Observance of **World Water Day** (March 22) reflects on the importance of water in our daily lives and remembers those who lack access to adequate drinking water supplies.

For women and girls around the world, it can be a 12 hour walk to the nearest water source to collect water to maintain basic needs and crucial hygiene practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. With your support, 100 families will benefit from the Water Well project, sponsored by the United Church of Christ in Mozambique (UCCM). When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you invest in the hopeful future of women and girls around the world and serve as co-workers with God to build **a just world for all**.

PRAYER LIST

MARCH



BIRTHDAYS

- 3/2 Luke Lybarger
Kara Taylor
- 3/3 Gabrielle Kelly
- 3/4 Linda Adams
Bill Bowen
Jim Campbell
- 3/5 Casara Beaver
Maria Kline
Dan Namet
- 3/6 Mary Bartlett
- 3/7 Sigrid Plajer
- 3/8 Courtney Hanes
Max Plajer
- 3/9 Craig Myers
- 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 Teisher
- 3/23 Kathy Ulrich
- 3/24 Craig Stark
- 3/25 Parker Derr
Quinn Hoot Kranzel
- 3/26 Erin Reed
Molly Snyder
Jeffrey Taylor
- 3/28 Bode Burkhardt
Laurie Derr
- 3/29 Joan Wagner
- 3/30 Justin Smith
William Weader, IV
- 3/31 Debra Smith
Margaret Weirick



ANNIVERSARIES

- 3/10 Max & Ann Leitzel
- 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

Members:

Al & Dot Deans
Helen Hannah
Ann Leitzel
Janeen Longer

Friends:

Candy Adkins
Susan & Tim Belotti
The Dunn Family
The family of Ethel Foor
Terry Garbo & family
Diane Ginter
Anne Harth
The family of Christa Plajer
The family of Justin Rhoades

Kathy S.
Rhonda A.
Carol Sankey
Becky Steffen
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, leaders of the world, those who are working for peace and understanding, and all the children of the world.

Pastor Dietmar,
Thank you so much to you and your congregation for all your prayers and support during my recent illness and hospitalization and surgery. It really

made a difference in my recovery.
Raven and Marv are very lucky to be surrounded by such great people.

Ginny Lloyd

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul's,
I wish to thank you for the beautiful vase of flowers and the birthday cards I received in honor of my 80th birthday and the 39 years which I served at St.

Paul's as church secretary. It was a joy to serve in that position.

I appreciate your thoughts and caring.

In Christian Love,
Nancy Wagner

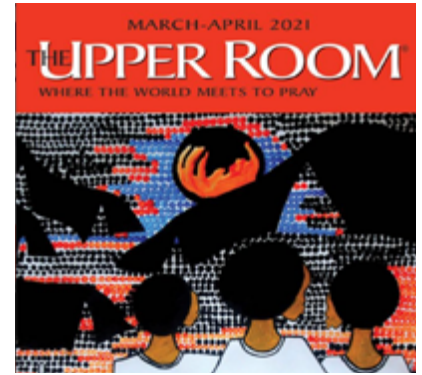
Dear Pastor Dietmar and the good people of St. Paul's,

I can't thank you all enough for all the love, support, and prayers that you ALL have been surrounding me with these past few monhs. I have received so many cards full of inspirations and encouragement. I feel so honored and humbled to be hearing from so many of you and to be part of this wonderful congregation in some small way. It is much easier to be positive and optimistic in the darkest of times while wrapped in so much love and prayer! I know my beloved Auntie Raven and sweet Rudnitsky extended family have been keeping you "in the loop" on my diagnosis, treatment, and multiple surgeries and I'm very happy to report

that I am officially cancer-free with a very little chance of it EVER returning and am recovering very well and comfortably from my last "big surgery."

I feel so blessed and grateful that we caught it early and to have an amazing healthcare system and surgeons that have been by my side through this whole process, but mostly for all of my friends, family, and all of the loving and caring people from St. Paul's for being so supportive, caring, and loving to me in my time of need. Pastor Dietmar, I always appreciate your kind words - they are so comforting.

Lots of love,
Becky



A great thank you to Isabel Proger for creating an abundance of beach glass! She worked very hard and turned shards into sea glass which graces our communion table during this Lenten season. We will also use the beach glass for crafts and decorations on other occasions.

On behalf of St. Paul's and personally, thank you!
Pastor Dietmar

You can pick up the 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.

To Pastor Dietmar and my St. Paul's Church family,

I am humbled and grateful for your care and thoughtfulness while I was ill. Your cards, prayers, concerns, phone calls, text messages, meals, flowers, treats meant very much to me. My cup is overflowing and I am drinking from the saucer.

Your thoughtfulness is a gift I will always treasure.

Thank you, thank you!
Sally Lauer

Sigrid and I are deeply grateful for the love, prayers, and care you, the wonderful people of St. Paul's, expressed through your personal cards, emails, text messages, and phone calls as we grieve the death of my mother, Christa Plajer. Even though my mother was in overall ill health dealing with several chronic conditions, her death on February 3 was unexpected to us and to our family. Christa's passing is a great loss. We take comfort that she is at peace and that her suffering has come to an end. We feel deeply blessed that we have had Christa for so many years. Thank you for your kind and caring support through this time of loss.

Gratefully,
Pastor Dietmar and family

Faith In Action

Christians and Gun Violence Prevention

Wednesday, March 10th / 7-8:30pm

Panelists include:


Peter Murchison '73
Religious Society of Friends

Rev. Carrie Call, PhD
United Church of Christ

Father Michael Rothan
Roman Catholic Church


Rev. Don Gaffney
Disciples of Christ

Register here:
<http://bit.ly/FaithInAction2021>




An online webinar via Zoom:

Gun violence incidents of firearm suicide, domestic violence, and unintentional shootings by minors leave a wake of survivors and victims. How do Christians respond? Our panelists explore how Christian faith and individual beliefs may catalyze gun violence prevention advocacy work. This webinar welcomes you to reflect on your own faith and its role in the work to end gun violence.



MOMS DEMAND ACTION
FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA



Bucknell
UNIVERSITY

Sponsored by Central Susquehanna Valley Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense and Bucknell University's Religious & Spiritual Life, Religious Studies, and the Mellon Grant for Confounding Problems and the Public Humanities and Arts.

St. Paul's Council Meeting February 9, 2021

In Attendance: Sara Adams, Marty Blessing, Susan Bolig, Rick Campbell, Amy Caron, Bob Engel, Beverly Heinemann, Stacy Heinemann, Jack Lewis, Ivana Lluveras, Donna Long, Peggy Peeler, Pastor Dietmar & Sigrid Plajer, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, Kathy Ulrich, Michael Zettlemoyer.

Minutes – A motion was made by Stacey Heinemann and seconded by Rick Campbell to approve the minutes from January 13th. The motion was approved.

Financial Report – Donna Long reported. A motion was made by Bob Engel and seconded by Jack Lewis to approve the financial report. The motion was approved.

• Of note: Sigrid will sign us up for Amazon Smile as a charity donation recipient.

Pastor's Report – Included in newsletter.

Unfinished Business & New Business:

• **Pastor Parish Relations** - Raven Rudnitsky will serve along with Barb Lewis and Lois Bruno.

• **Worship in person, via internet and by**

phone- How do you feel it is going? Any suggestions or concerns? Attendance in-house is 20-25 people. Online it averages 40 devices watching live. We will continue doing both online services and in-person, contingent on PA state guidelines for indoor gatherings. Dietmar asks us to share our streaming service with friends/family, asking them to watch it just once in order to share ideas and feedback on our streaming service.

• **What is St Paul's Vision?** - Revisit this topic when we can move away from the Pandemic

• **Fellowship Committee** – Still considering our future approach. One idea is to have one chairperson for the committee or consider 3-4 different people, each person specifically organizing one event ex: Kick off Picnic/Block Party, Hay ride, Birthday Bash or new ideas.

• **How do you experience God, How did God hold you?** Sermon series is wrapping up – the personal testimonies have been a great part of that. Pastor Dietmar made one more call for individuals to share for the final Sunday.

• **Visitation Ministry Coordinator** - search is ongoing.

• **Leadership Orientation** – Date still to 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.

• **Committee Reports:**

-- **Personnel Committee** – Maya Caron was hired as the Bell Choir Director for the Lenten/Easter season. This is a temporary position that may expand beyond that if there's a wider interest. If there is to be a continuing bell choir, there would be a new/wider search that Maya could apply for if she wishes. The first rehearsal got great reviews.

-- **Stewardship & Finance** – 2 issues brought by Michael Zettlemoyer.

(1) Upon recommendation from the Stewardship and Finance Committee, Council decided to designate a gift made for Pastor Dietmar as funds to be used for continuing education purposes by the pastor.

(2) As recommended by Stewardship and Finance, Council decided to transfer funds from the church's checking account to investments.

Next Council Meeting: March 9th @ 7 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Shane Sanders, Council Secretary

Pastor's Report - January 2021

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

We finished off the awful Covid-19 pandemic year of 2020 in stable financial position. I am deeply touched and moved by the faithful generosity that you, the deeply caring and amazing members

and friends of St. Paul's, have practiced. We have had many wonderful members and friends who went above and beyond and gave sacrificially to keep our vital and vibrant ministries funded through the worst year in a century. Wow! That is truly amazing! Thank you!

We installed our five new council members for the 2021-2023 term in wor-

ship on Sunday, January 10: Sara Adams, Amy Caron, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, and Michael Zettlemoyer. I am deeply grateful for these amazing, deeply caring and committed members to join our church leadership team on Church Council. At the January Council meeting, the Council elected their new leadership, Susan Bolig as Council President, Marty

Blessing as Vice President, and Shane Sanders as Secretary. What a phenomenal leadership team we have in place! On behalf of St. Paul's and personally, I express our deep gratitude to those who concluded their service on Council at the end of 2020: Carolyn Fairl, John Fischer, Lisa Krex, Joanne Lauer, and Raven Rudnitsky. All have done a phenomenal job!

"God Is Holding Your Life" is the theme for our worship series for the Epiphany season of the New Year. In and through all the turbulences, storms, unsettling experiences, fear, and anxiety, we are invited to turn to God who promised to hold our lives. What a wonderful invitation from God that we can trust and surrender in a positive way, knowing deep down in our hearts and in our bones that God is the stable foundation, the solid rock, the ground of being, the one who is holding us! I discover myself humming the theme song throughout the week and have received very positive feedback from members and friends that this message is spot on during this season of uncertainty!

Messy Church met for an exciting experience via Zoom on Sunday, January 17, under the theme "God Cares for Me." We had over 40 participants, children, families, and single adults who participated in the crafts, sharing, and games. I am deeply grateful to the wonderful team led by Sigrid Plajer on a volunteer basis. The Messy Church team meets regularly to plan, prepare, coordinate, and make this amazing program happen on a monthly basis. It is called Messy Church, because children and families, young and old, we all together, are invited to come as we are, with our "messy" lives (no one has a perfect life) and explore faith in fun, hands-on, and engaging ways. Messy Church is the most amazing new program of St. Paul's!

On a monthly basis I meet with the members of the Mixed Adult Sunday school class previously led by Richard

Wagner via phone conference call. The members of this group are deeply grateful for the loving care and warm bonding they experience with each other during these gatherings. They, as so many of us, are longing for community, caring relationships, and experience this with one another.

I am grateful that Maya Caron applied to direct handbell ringers during this coming Lenten and Easter season. After diligent interviewing, the Personnel Committee together with the Music Committee decided to hire Maya Caron as temporary bell choir director. Handbells are about the only choir music we can provide from our sanctuary during the Covid-19 pandemic in a safe way, while wearing masks and keeping social distance. All ringers and participants follow our church safety protocol religiously. I am excited about Maya Caron directing a bell ensemble for this season and trust that she will bring out the best in the ringers.

The Culture and Christianity Sunday School Class meets on a weekly basis every Wednesday evening at 7 PM via Zoom. After initially watching a 15-minute NOOMA video by Rob Bell, the group engages deeply meaningful and moving conversations. Raven Rudnitsky facilitates this group with amazing skill and an open heart. We have had up to 20 participants join the conversations on Wednesdays. I am especially grateful that this group also discusses on a monthly basis critical matters of faith that are very important and challenging like racism, classism, faith and politics. I am deeply grateful to all from this group and specifically to Raven for inviting us to grow in faith, hope, and love through meaningful, respectful, and caring conversations on topics that really matter!

During January I invested significant time in planning and preparing for the Lenten Season which will start on Ash

Wednesday, February 17. I am very grateful for the wonderful creative support of the Worship Team under the leadership of Carolyn Fairl and Jevan Beaver. They help make our services moving and deeply meaningful.

Susan Bolig, the new Council President, handed me the Christmas gift of the congregation with warm and heartfelt remarks in worship on January 31. I received a check of \$275, comprising the gifts of individual church members sent to St. Paul's to be used as Christmas gift for the Pastor and his family. I am deeply grateful for your loving support and generous gifts. You, the members and friends of St. Paul's are the best!

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 many cards and notes, meet with colleagues, etc.

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.

January 1-31, 2021

Days worked	25
Days off	5
Continuing Education	0
Vacation days	0
Holidays	1
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



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...



Greetings from Messy Church! Join us again on March 14!