



# THE MESSENGER

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

**Messy Church**

**EASTER**

**Messy Church**

**MARCH 10 AT 4 PM**

St. Paul's UCC

*Palm Sunday*

**Meet & Eat**

**JOIN US AFTER WORSHIP!**

**MARCH 24 11:30 AM**

**Fellowship Hall**

**Resurrection Stories**

**Unlock yours**

New worship series beginning March 31, 2024

**CHURCH TREASURES**

**MARCH 24 AFTER CHURCH IN FELLOWSHIP HALL**

BOOKS FLYNNALS  
VINTAGE FINDS  
TRINKETS DISHES  
\$5 DONATIONS WELCOME



I love our Gospels in how realistically they depict Jesus in his passion and victory. Jesus becomes tangible and real. I hear the excited crowd celebrating Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. I can feel the anger of Jesus as he turns over the tables of the money changers. I am awed by the wisdom of Jesus as he teaches in the temple and responds to those who try to trap him with, "Should we pay taxes?" I am inspired by how Jesus, like a servant, washes his followers' dirty feet. He shares himself at the Passover Meal and reinterprets it, drawing all of us into the feast of God. Jesus is wrestling in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is betrayed. He is in agony as he is nailed to the cross. It cannot get more real than that.

I'm grateful for how real Jesus is, flesh and blood, and how he meets us in our

suffering. We continue to explore the sacred stories of Jesus' Passion during Lent. Where do we find ourselves in Jesus' stories? How do they speak to us as we enter them?

The prophet Isaiah describes the suffering servant, who is willing to carry our burdens. Jesus does that for us by being close to us in our own suffering and pain. I often wish life would be easier. But it is not. It is comforting to me that Jesus is real, flesh and blood, close by us when we experience tragedy. When we lose sight. When we feel lost, abandoned, or overwhelmed. Jesus has been there. He knows what it feels like. And he promised to be with us in the mud and muck of our lives. I tend to forget that. I need our worship services to remind me of that. To draw me in and make sense of the suffering. To grow closer to God.

This Lent we are walking into the deepest darkness and suffering with Jesus. On Maundy Thursday at 7 p.m. we witness Jesus' self-giving love. We experience the darkness and silence of death itself with our Tenebrae service. On Good Friday from 12-3 p.m. we gather for a Community Service at Sharon Lutheran Church to walk with Jesus through his final hours. Without walking with Jesus into the darkness of death, I cannot grasp the significance of Easter.

Holy Week becomes holy for us when we grow closer to Jesus in his suffering and victory. Jesus is raised, and we are rising with him to a resurrection life. He lives and raises us to new life. I'm really excited about our Easter Services and Easter Season. We will explore together how Jesus sets us free and how he transforms us. Easter helps us unfold and unlock our potential. We grow wings and soar with Jesus.

Invite a friend and join us for a meaningful and moving Lent and Easter celebration in the footsteps of Jesus. I love our Gospels as they invite us to immerse ourselves in Jesus' passion and victory.

Yours in faith, hope, and love,

*Pastor Dietmar*

### Highlights of the Easter season:

- **Palm Sunday Celebration Service on March 24 at 10:30 a.m. with the children's procession and our traditional Palms**
  - Meet and Eat luncheon in the Fellowship Hall following the worship service.
  - St. Paul's Treasures & More in the Fellowship Hall after the worship service. Come find some old treasures and take them home with you. These are various items that have been unearthed from the many storage spaces in the church that need to find a new home. Donations will be gratefully accepted.
- **Maundy Thursday on March 28 at 7 p.m. with Holy Communion and Tenebrae service**
- **Community Good Friday Service from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Sharon Lutheran**
- **Easter Celebration Services on March 31**
  - Sunrise Service at 6:30 a.m., when we light our candles from the Easter fire on our front lawn and walk into the dark sanctuary, lighting it up with our candles.
  - Easter Celebration Service at 10:30 a.m.
  - Groundbreaking Ceremony for our Renewing St. Paul's big renovation project following the worship service.



# EASTER MESSY CHURCH MARCH 10 AT 4 P.M.



How do you believe something that is unbelievable? The women at the tomb that morning must have thought they were crazy. I think most of us would think it was a dream. It was only when these women were reminded of their teacher's words that they snapped out of their confusion. Sometimes it is difficult for us to snap out of our confusion about our faith, too. When Easter comes every year, we are reminded of the beautiful and amazing mystery that is the resurrection of Jesus. It helps us to snap out of our daze and remember that this was foretold for generations and that believers all over the world continue to tell this story to those who listen. We believe because we have faith and we tell the story with joy, just like the women told the disciples. Each time we tell the story, our faith grows as does our love for Jesus Christ.

Come to Easter Messy Church on March 10 at 4 p.m. and explore the joy of Easter with us! Please sign up [here](#) so we know you're coming and prepare for you.



## Meet & Eat March 24 after church

The March Meet and Eat will be on March 24 (Palm Sunday). We will provide sandwich fixings and drinks and you are welcome to bring a dessert with you if you'd like. Come enjoy a nice relaxed lunch along with conversation and fellowship after our service! Please use [this link](#) to sign up so we can better plan the amount of food.

# EASTER STORIES: UNLOCK YOURS



This Easter Season we celebrate all the ways in which resurrection is possible for us. We will explore together what binds us and keeps us away from the joy of life. We can be in need of rising from the depth of grief, addiction, poverty, oppression, illness, and suffering not just physically and literally, but also spiritually. We will experience how to embrace God's potential for us. We will unlock the fulness of life that God created for us.

Invite a friend and join us for meaningful, moving, and uplifting worship services beginning with Easter Sunday, March 31.

# MARCH



## BIRTHDAYS

- 3/02 Luke Lybarger  
Kara Taylor
- 3/03 Gabrielle Kelly
- 3/04 Linda Adams  
Bill Bowen  
Jim Campbell
- 3/05 Dan Namet  
Casara Beaver
- 3/07 Sigrid Plajer
- 3/08 Courtney Hanes  
Max Plajer
- 3/09 Craig Myers
- 3/10 Cassidy Alvieri
- 3/11 Karen Athey
- 3/12 Scott Bernstein  
Alexander Siegel
- 3/13 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 Kline
- 3/26 Erin Reed  
Jeffrey Taylor
- 3/27 Zachary Hanes
- 3/28 Bode Burkhart  
Laurie Derr
- 3/29 Joan Wagner
- 3/30 Justin Smith
- 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

# PRAYER LIST

- Bill Dell
- Don Groner
- Beverly Heinemann
- The Family of Nettie Inch
- John Kinney
- Riley Klinger
- Kathy Kreitzer and Family
- David Lauer, Jr.
- Jack Lewis
- Don, Courtney & Abigail Mong
- Pastor Mary Peterhaensel and Family
- John Rothermel
- The Family of Kim Snodgrass
- Katelynn Thompson
- 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
- The people of Israel and Gaza
- We pray for peace



## EASTER FLOWERS & NON-LILY MINISTRY FOR HOFFMAN HOMES

### EASTER FLOWERS PRESENTED BY:

- Anonymous** in honor of Kim Haizlett
- Deb & Terry Burns**
- Kay Cramer** in memory of my parents, Bill & Stella Stephenson
- Carolyn Fairl**
- Caroline & Dennis Frantz** in memory of Lisa Marie Frantz
- Cheryl Gemberling** in memory of Kirby Gemberling
- Erin Guedegebuure**
- Joyce Hendricks** in memory of Ted Hendricks
- Caroline Kissinger** in memory of Jerry & daughter Pamela Sue
- Lisa Krex** in memory of my mother, Janet
- Carol Miller** in honor of Charles Klingler and in memory of Dolly Klingler
- Peggy Peeler**

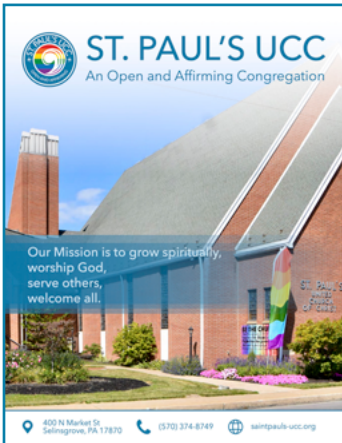
### Sigrid Plajer

- in memory of my mother
- Cheryl Reddinger** in memory of Wilbur Reddinger
- Raven Rudnitsky** in honor of the best family & friends anyone could have and in memory of all the beautiful people who shaped my life as a child
- Barbara Stanke** in honor of LaVerne J. Stanke and in memory of Dolly Klingler
- Craig Stark** in memory of Larry Augustine and Gerald E. Turner
- Randy Tanner** in memory of Howard & Frances Tanner
- Linda Turner** in memory of Mom & Dad
- Erin & Jacob Yatsko** in memory of John & Lillian McManus

### NON-LILY MINISTRY FOR HOFFMAN HOMES PRESENTED BY:

- Kay Cramer** in honor of our daughters, Julie & Maria
- John & Gail Fischer** in honor of our children and in memory of Bob & Carolyn, and our parents
- Caroline & Dennis Frantz** in honor of "He is Risen"
- Susan & Jerry Harman** in memory of Ed & Charlotte Barben
- Carol Miller** in honor of Charles Klingler and in memory of Dolly Klingler
- Peggy Peeler**
- Raven Rudnitsky** in honor of everyone who works with special needs children
- Randy Tanner** in honor of all healthcare workers
- Linda Turner** in honor of my boss and his wife

# UPDATE FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE



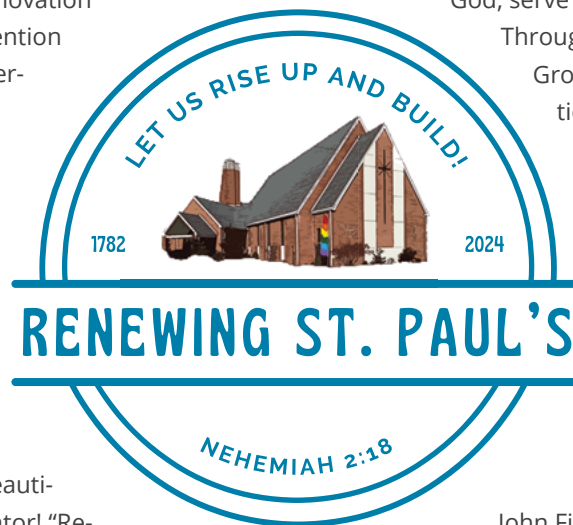
The Search Committee for our new Associate Pastor is very pleased to share this copy of our local church profile [here](#). The position has been posted on the UCC opportunities page, and we are hopeful that we will soon be receiving applications. The review of applications must understandably be a confidential process until the final candidate comes to

meet us on a visitation weekend, but we will provide general updates as the search for a new associate pastoral leader begins. We ask for your prayers, that God will lead us and the right candidate to each other!

Peggy Peeler,  
Search Committee Chair

# UPDATE FROM THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Just a quick update from the major renovation capital campaign. Thanks for your attention and support during the February 11 service where we officially commissioned the campaign team – Marty Blessing, Lois Bruno, John Fischer, Jean LeGros, Randy Tanner, Chanin Wendling, and Pastor Dietmar. We are off to a great start and are excited to announce that the campaign is called “Renewing St. Paul’s”. We feel that name embraces the spirit of the renovations – lots of fixes here and there in the church to maintain our beautiful building, and we’re adding an elevator! “Renewing St. Paul’s” also revitalizes our commitment to uphold St. Paul’s mission: “to grow spiritually, worship



God, serve others, welcome all.”

Through the great work of the Property & Grounds committee, we expect construction to start right after Easter and be finished by the end of the summer, in time for our fall program schedule. We can't wait to walk on the repaired sidewalks, be free of water damage risk, and enjoy an elevator in our Loaves and Fishes ministry. And remember, we already have \$160K of the \$300K needed for the project. God has truly blessed us!

John Fischer and Chanin Wendling  
Campaign Co-Chairs



# ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING FEBRUARY 13, 2024

*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, Lisa Krex, Jacob Koch, Carol Miller, Joanne Lauer, John Fischer, Allen Wetzal, Randy Tanner, Kimmie Burkhart, Malcolm Derk, Torri Stark, John Stante.

**Minutes of January Meeting:** The January meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Dietmar sent his report out in advance of the meeting. The new worship series for Lent, Ash Wednesday, & Easter: "Entering the Passion of Jesus". It will focus on where and how we find ourselves in the stories of Holy Week.

**Financial Report:** The January Financial Reports were sent out in advance of the meeting and were approved as presented.

**New Council Members:** We need a replacement for Mary Dahlmann (2025 class). Torri, as secretary, will coordinate the recruiting efforts.

**Strategic Planning:** Hospitality - Pastor Dietmar stressed the importance of all members welcoming new people in the pews both before and after the service by church members. It was suggested that we move visitor name tags to the front table closer to the doors. Pastor Dietmar will talk to the Church Growth & Membership committee about post-service greeters.

**Associate Pastor:** The church profile is finished and will be submitted for signatures and posted on the UCC website.

**Renovation Project:** Jacob Koch reported that the contractor will start the renovation project the week after Easter. The construction is broken down in three areas: Area A will be on the Mill Street side - sidewalk & additional concrete by the lobby doors to accommodate funeral needs. Area B will be the alley - the two stairwells, sidewalk, and elevator. Area C will be on the north side of the building - sidewalk and stairs. Target completion is the third week in June.

**Safety Plan:** Property and Grounds will discuss remaining 'To Do' items on the safety plan: inside door numbers, exit signs, push bar front doors, evacuation maps, water/sewer shut off, knock box with key for Emergency Personnel, additional AED for Fellowship Hall, and lock bar instructions.

**Youth Leader Search:** There is no update - Christian Ed and Personnel committees will continue to work on it.

**Nursery Coverage:** There is no update - Christian Ed and Personnel committees will continue to work on it.

**Capital Campaign Committee:** John Fischer reported that the campaign team is working on a brochure and a plan to talk to people. The official name for the project is Renewing St. Paul's. \$140,000 is still needed to reach the \$300,000 budget goal, and any extra money raised will go to other renovations as needed.

## Committee Reports

**Property & Grounds:** Spring Clean Out and Clean Up - Saturday, April 6, 9-12. Jacob reported that people are needed to help both before and on April 6. Musicians and the Worship Team will help before the event, and volunteers from the congregation will help during the event. Volunteers are needed to help clear out the music storage room for the Associate Pastor's office and a few other cluttered areas. Coffee & donuts with Pastor Dietmar will be at 8:45, and a pizza lunch will follow the clean up at noon. Jacob also reported a need for more committee members. He would like to delegate different areas of the church to different people to oversee so the responsibilities are better distributed.

**Personnel Committee:** Joanne Lauer volunteered to serve with Malcolm Derk and Allen Wetzal, but the scheduling, supervision, and finding of substitutes for nursery personnel is not covered. Pastor Dietmar is looking for someone who is willing to help. Malcolm Derk reported that Buddy's Cleaning Service will continue to help John with custodial needs until his surgery and throughout his recovery.

**Holy Week:** Palm Sunday is March 24 with Meet and Eat in the Fellowship Hall following the service. Maundy Thursday service is March 28 at 7 pm. The Good Friday Community Service is at Sharon Lutheran Church on March 29 from noon - 3:00 pm. Easter Sunday is March 31 and there will be a sunrise service at 6:30 am with the classic service at 10:30 am. Groundbreaking for the renovation project, Renewing St. Paul's, will follow the 10:30 service.

**Communion March 3:** Class of '26 - Jacob Koch, Carol Miller (captain), Jon Stante & Torri Stark. More communion elements need to be prepared as attendance numbers are higher.

Next Council Meeting: March 12, 7:00 pm

Devotions for March Meeting: Randy Tanner

Respectfully submitted,

Torri Stark, Council Secretary







# PASTOR'S REPORT - JANUARY 2024

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

"God is Holding Your Life" is our worship series for the New Year. We are invited to trust God and share with one another how we have been held and how we can hold each other. Our choirs, musicians, accompanists, and pianists contribute immensely to our services. I am grateful for them and for all who provide Children's Messages and function as lecturers and as greeters. Our Worship Team helped decorate.

We installed our new Council Members in worship on January 21: Jacob Koch, Joanne Lauer, Lisa Krex, Carol Miller, Jon Stante, and Torri Stark. I'm grateful for all who serve on Council and for those in their new leadership positions: Randy Tanner as President, Malcolm Derk as VP and Torri Stark as Secretary. My heartfelt gratitude goes to those who went off Council: Sara Adams, Amy Caron, Shane Sanders, Linda Turner, and Michael Zettlemoyer. Thank you for your faithful service!

We gathered for the Leadership Orientation after the service on January 21 to focus on our vision, mission, and ministries and ensure that St. Paul's operations run smoothly. Good communication is key for that.

I've been cooperating closely with the Property and Grounds team on the planning for the big renovation scheduled for this spring/summer and with the Capital Campaign team who is helping us raise funds for this much-needed renovation. We have \$300,000 budgeted for the work, which includes funding for contingencies. The great news is that we already have \$160,000 available due to the generosity of Dianne Sheaffer and those who contributed to the Major Repair Fund through the years. We still need \$140,000. I'm excited that the project includes installing an elevator to the fellowship hall which makes it ADA accessible and so much easier for the Loaves and Fishes food deliveries.

Much of my times and energy goes into coordinating ministries with our committees and ministry teams, includ-

ing Messy Church. I continue to visit with people in the hospital, partner in ministry with colleagues and churches in our Central Association, Penn Central Conference, and our Selinsgrove Area Ministerium. I contribute to the weekly eNews emails and monthly newsletters.

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, 2024	
Days worked	21
Days off	07
Continuing Education	00
Vacation days	00
Family Leave	02
Holidays	01
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,  
Pastor Dietmar Plajer




## One Great Hour of Sharing SHARE THE LIGHT

was met. That was the beginning of the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. This year marks the 75th Anniversary of its inception. Our world has changed since 1949, but human needs remain. OGHS continues to carry God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. Since that first offering, OGHS has expanded its mission to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by national disaster, advocate and offer resettlement assistance for refugees and displaced persons, and combat injustice in its many forms. OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance in collaboration with local and international partners.

Our Special Offering in March goes to One Great Hour of Sharing. Please support this worthwhile mission. You can give online [here](#).

On Easter Sunday in 1949, on nation-wide radio, Christians were challenged to donate one million dollars in one hour to help people devastated by the aftermath of World War II. Faithful Christians answered the challenge and the goal



**GRIEF AND LOSS**  
**AND ITS CONNECTION TO DEMENTIA**  
 THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024  
 10 AM-NOON OR 4:30-6:30 PM

**Grief and Loss and its Connection to Dementia**

**Thursday, March 21st 10am-noon or 4:30pm-6:30pm**

**Rudy Gelnett Memorial Library,  
 1 N. High Street, Selinsgrove**

Andrea Runkle, LSW, Social Worker and Bereavement Coordinator, Hospice of Evangelical, will be leading an open discussion about how the grieving process looks differently when you care about someone who is living with dementia. Anyone age 18 or older who is connected to someone living with dementia or has lost someone to dementia is invited to attend. Registration is required – register by calling 570-522-2157.

**THANK YOU NOTE**

To all Loaves & Fishes Contributors,  
 I want to express my sincere gratitude to all those who generously gave to Loaves & Fishes through church donations. With your support, our current funding will help carry us through 2024!  
 Blessings,  
 Randy Tanner



**ENJOY**  
**A CUP OF COFFEE OR TEA**

Enjoy a freshly brewed cup of coffee or tea. We installed a coffee station in the foyer just for you. You can take the coffee with you to any meeting and into the sanctuary. If you miss a flavor, bring a box of K-cups to share. Enjoy!

**DISCONTINUING USED BATTERY COLLECTION**



We have officially sent off the last box of used batteries and will no longer be accepting them. Unfortunately, it is no longer feasible for us to cover the cost of battery removal. Our recommendation is to switch to rechargeable batteries whenever possible. We appreciate your dedication to creating a more sustainable world.

Thank you for your understanding!

**Support the Susquehanna Valley Chorale singers**

Several of our members and friends from St. Paul's are singing in the Susquehanna Valley Chorale (SVC), which will present a brand-new choral work for its spring performance, "Amendment: Righting Our Wrongs," at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 16 and 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, in Stretansky Hall on the campus of Susquehanna University. This new choral work celebrates women's suffrage through underrepresented voices and brings to the forefront those who still fight for the right to vote today.



**AMENDMENT**  
 ★ ★ ★ **RIGHTING OUR WRONGS** ★ ★ ★  
*Celebrating Women's Empowerment and Resilience*

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 2024 • 7:30PM  
 SUNDAY, MARCH 17, 2024 • 3:00PM  
 Stretansky Hall, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove

**Purchase tickets today!**



Beginning March 24, Palm Sunday, after church come to the fellowship hall and find some treasures to take home

### What will you find?

This Palm Sunday, we invite you to explore a delightful array of vintage church treasures in our fellowship hall. Browse through a variety of items, from timeless decor pieces to one-of-a-kind trinkets, hymnals, kitchen items, etc. and choose your favorites to take home.

These are all items that were unearthed during the recent cleanout of various storage rooms and closets here at St. Paul's, and they now need a new home.

We are grateful if you wish to make a donation to St. Paul's if you find something that you want to have. All donations will go to the Major Repairs Fund.

Come and see what you can find!



## We need your help!

In order to make space for our Associate Pastor, we need to reorganize our church storage areas and will have to clean out items which we are not using any more. Many people have already been working diligently by cleaning out spaces and closets and organizing things, but a lot more needs to be done. We ask for your help to sort out, clean out, and carry items from various closets and storage rooms in church buildings into the

fellowship hall/garage.

This is a big job and it takes many helpers to make it happen. Everyone can help, no matter your age or ability. We will offer coffee and donuts at 8:45 a.m. on March 23 and April 6 and pizza and cookies at 12 noon on those days. Please let the church office know if you can help or just show up. Thank you!

Jacob Koch and Property and Grounds Team

### THESE ARE THE 3 DATES YOU CAN HELP

#### March 23, 9a-12p

We need lots of help on March 23 to clean out the various storage spaces in the church and take selected items to the fellowship hall. Items will be placed on tables and, beginning Palm Sunday, March 24, people will be able to browse through the items and find some treasures to take home with them.

#### April 6, 9a-12p

Remaining items from the fellowship hall and junk and recyclables from everywhere else will be moved to the garage.

#### April 11, 5:30p

The items from the garage and anything else that needs thrown away and is still in the church building will be placed on the curb for pickup by the Borough.



## St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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Tel. (570) 374-8749

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

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

**Worship on Sunday at 10:30 a.m.**

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

*"God is Still Speaking"*

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

