



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
400 North Market Street , Selinsgrove, PA 17870

THE MESSENGER

God is still speaking,

May 2020

“Never place a period where God has placed a comma.” - Gracie Allen

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How to Be the Church - St. Paul's Ministries are Ongoing

1. We offer two worship services every week, Sundays at 10:30 AM and Wednesdays at 7 PM with deeply meaningful messages of faith and hope, including uplifting and heartwarming music.
2. We call on all people of St. Paul's who are at risk of isolation.
3. We continue to feed the hungry from our community through our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry and through food distribution for low-income families of the Selinsgrove Area School District.
4. We create and mail out our monthly "The Messenger" newsletter.
5. We email twice per week to ALL who are interested "St. Paul's Good News." You can sign up for that through St. Paul's website. Scroll down and at the bottom right you sign up with your email address.
6. We share with families, children, youth, and seniors what they can do to grow in faith.
7. Pastor Dietmar meets on Thursdays at 7:00 PM, via Zoom with members and friends of the congregation. You can tune in through the link from St. Paul's Facebook page.
8. Church Council and church committees continue to meet electronically via Zoom.
9. Pastor Dietmar continues to officiate funerals (two in late March).
10. We continue our Card and Care Ministry, sending caring notes to those who are facing challenges.
11. Pastor Dietmar is always available to you. You can reach him by email: dietmar@saintpauls-ucc.org or call or text him at (570) 541-0121.

St. Paul's ministries are vital and life sustaining during this crisis. More than ever we need a strong church with a clear message of hope. Will you please support your, our all's beloved St. Paul's and its vital ministries by giving online via our website? Giving online to St. Paul's is just as safe and secure as writing a check or as using your credit card for payments. If you need help, Jevan Beaver can help you set up online giving. Contact him via the church office. You can also make one-time gifts by texting "give" to (570) 258-8158. As always, sending your check in the mail will help us pay the bills and strengthens our message of hope and faith.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your prayers, your open heart, your caring attitude, and your generous spirit. St. Paul's is vibrant and relevant because of you!

Your Church Leadership

Summer Worship Schedule - 10:00 am

Church Council has decided to change our summer worship time to 10:00 am, with no Sunday School. Please note and share this information with others as we begin our summer worship schedule on Memorial Day weekend, May 24, through Labor Day weekend, September 6.



“What You Can Do To Survive During Anxious Times ”

- Take some deep breaths (pay attention to your breathing); meditate
- Call people on the phone and listen to them with an open heart
- Go for a walk, immerse yourself in God’s beautiful creation
- Pray for people, helpers, leaders, St. Paul’s, yourself, others
- Read a devotional with an open heart
- Immerse yourself in the Serenity Prayer
- Turn off the TV
- Listen to music; read a book
- Practice, “be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) - rest in God’s presence
- Read scriptures and pay attention to what God wants to tell you
- Try something new: journal; write a card or letter; draw or paint; do a craft
- Play card games, board games
- Remember, this too shall pass!

Our Tech Team who transmit our worship services, Jevan Beaver, Sigrid and Felix Plajer.



Pastor Dietmar presented a brief message for every day of Holy Week, here from Orchard's Hill Cemetery on Holy Saturday.

The Christian Education Committee meets electronically via Zoom.



“Dear Jesus...” Letters from Children

What do you want to tell Jesus? What do you want to ask Jesus? Write a letter by hand, draw or paint a picture, and mail them together to:

St. Paul’s UCC
400 N Market St.
Selinsgrove, PA 17870

By sending the letters and pictures you agree that the church

can use them to read in worship, to share them with others, and to publish them. Include your name and return address and you might receive an answer.

Thank you for writing to Jesus!



Soren drew a picture of Jesus walking on the water to rescue Peter.

Prayer station in the sanctuary.



Pastor Dietmar presents a message during Holy Week from the Selinsgrove Post Office.



Will You Contribute to Our Sunday Worship Services?

Are you willing to **read the scriptures** for a Sunday worship service or to **provide a children's message**?

You can record them from the safety of your home on a smart phone and send them electronically to our tech team that will include

them in our worship outline. For more information, please contact the worship team or Pastor Dietmar at (570) 541-0121.



Jane Taylor (left) presents the Children's Message for Easter Sunday. Wendy Mull (right) presents the Children's Message on April 19.



Share Your Gift of Music in Worship

We welcome musicians of any age and skill level to share their gift of music in worship. It can be as simple as playing the sax or flute, singing a duet, solo, or the like. I know that our congregation

would very much appreciate various contributions. They can be recorded on a smart phone or tablet/computer and our tech team can play them during our Sunday morning worship services. They can be edited - the beginning

and end - by our tech team. You can receive the contact info for our tech team through the church office. Thank you for sharing yourself and your gift of music in worship.

The Senior Choir presents "I Choose Love" in worship on Easter Sunday.



Volunteers Needed for Loaves and Fishes - May 29

We need healthy volunteers for our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry on Friday, May 29, 9 am-12 pm and 12:30-2:00 pm. The church will provide every volunteer with a face mask and

will have ample hand sanitizer available for all. Volunteers will pack grocery bags in the fellowship hall in the morning for the afternoon curb-side pickup. Clients will drive up from 12:30-2:00 and volunteers

will place the grocery bags in clients' cars without physical contact. If you are at risk or are closely connected with someone who is, please stay at home!



Above: Loaves and Fishes volunteers with coordinator, Randy Tanner (far right, yellow shirt).

Below: Loaves and Fishes volunteers, from left: Roger Rathfon, Jeanette and Mike Dressler.



Easter Ministry

The Ministry Committee, along with the Kitchen Cupboard, served 6 families with food boxes for the Easter holiday. This included 12 adults and 15 children

for a total of 27 people served. Wal-Mart gift cards were provided to all families. Thank you to everyone who donated toward the food boxes, gift

cards and to those who helped to deliver the boxes. We couldn't accomplish this without your help!



Volunteers helping deliver Easter Food Baskets to local families in need.

Connect with Fellow Members and Friends

Connect with Fellow Members and Friends in a casual, comfortable setting via Zoom on Thursday evenings at 7 PM.

It is easiest for you to connect

through your smart phone and electronic tablet when you download the Zoom app. On your computer, you can follow the link that you find on St. Paul's Facebook page. We

will publish the link with how to connect - you can also call in by phone - on the church's Facebook page on Thursdays before we meet at 7 PM.



Non-Lily Ministry for Hoffman Homes

Presented by:

John & Gail Fischer in honor of Violet Remaley.

John & Gail Fischer in memory of Bob Burd and Carolyn Fischer.

LaMar & Sue Henise in memory of Stanley & Georgina Wagner.

Linda Adams in honor of Megan Adams & Jon Allocca.

Linda Adams in honor of Nancy, Raym, Rebecca & Andrew Adams.

Linda Adams in memory of Kathryn & Simon Rhoads.

Kim Rigel in honor of Myrletta Kline by Dayna, Kim and Tamra.

Kim Rigel in memory of Norman Kline by Myrletta, Dayna, Kim and Tamra.

Donnell & Fred Kelly in honor of Rachael, Gabby & Ethan Kelly.

Donnell & Fred Kelly in memory of Don & Fannie Walther and Fred & Gladys Kelly.

Kelly & Steve Feiler in honor of the Rudnitskys, Carons, and Burkharts.

Kelly & Steve Feiler in memory of the Feilers and Wrays.

Ann & Max Leitzel in honor of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Ann & Max Leitzel in memory of our parents and grandparents.

Summer Special Music Needed



Starting May 24, we need special music contributors every Sunday. Can you sing or play an instrument on a Sunday morning this

summer? Do you know someone who can but needs to be asked? A quartet singing a beautiful hymn would be very nice. There are lots of ideas and we have so much talent here.

I'll post a sign-up sheet outside the Music Room. Let me know by email too, please at: Rudnitsky@RHPLegal.com.

Marv Rudnitsky,
Music Committee Chair

Thank You Notes

Dear Pastor Plajer,

When a youth is placed at Bethany, they are scared, angry, and without hope. Most will come with the clothes on their back and if they are lucky, they may have a small bag of personal belongings. They are seeking for someone to listen, provide a guiding hand, and care about them. Though it may be difficult for them at first, our youth begin to see that there are so many new opportunities available to them at Bethany. Every resident not only receives the most basic needs for food, shelter and clothing, but also opportunities to learn new life skills. They can attend school, participate in art, music and recreation programs, work/volunteer in the community, and build new friendships. Through these programs, they can regain control of their life and set a new path for their futures.

Thank you for your generous gift of \$600 (check dated 2/12/2020) to Bethany's Brighter Future Fund. Your special gift to the Brighter Future Fund will provide our youth with a new foundation to become empowered young adults with positive goals.

Thank you for thinking of our youth during this time of year. Your ongoing support will help them to continue to heal and take back their lives.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Shultz Spano

Director of Development, Bethany Children's Home

Thank you, Thank you!

We lift up some people who excelled during this time and who keep us going as a congregation. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to them on behalf of the whole congregation.

Carolyn Patton, who has been playing the piano for every Wednesday 7 PM worship service since March 18 and for many Sunday morning worship services.

Jevan Beaver, Sigrid and Felix Plajer function as tech team and keep transmitting our worship services online via Facebook live stream through our church's website.

William "Bill" Hockenbrock is functioning as treasurer in addition to being Stewardship and Finance Chair.

Randy Tanner and the volunteers who feed hungry people from our community through our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry.

Allen and David Wetzel volunteer to mow the lawn around the church building.

Council Members, members of Church Growth and Membership, Christian Education Committees and members at large who call those who are at risk of isolation.

Youth Leader, Stacy Heinemann, who provides weekly video messages and craft projects to the children and parents of the Kids' Group.

Members of the Senior Choir who participated in the virtual "*I Choose Love*" presentation on Easter Sunday.

All children and parents who participated in the Palm Sunday online waving of the palms and Hosannah shouting.

Marv Rudnitsky and Bill Hockenbrock who applied for forgivable loans through the CARES act.

Mike Proger who keeps our church facility safe and in good order.

Lisa Krex who maintains the flower beds around the church.

All those many unnamed and faithful members and helpers who continue to pray, give, participate, care, and share God's message of hope, peace, and love.



Thankful



5/01 Mark Minier
 5/02 Camden Smith, Aubryana Zettlemoyer
 5/03 W. Lyle Mercer, III
 5/04 Linda Bowers, Ann Leitzel
 5/05 Nolan Fetterman, Scott Newman, Finn Smith,
 Jane Taylor
 5/06 Ann Groner
 5/07 Charlie Hermann, Shirley Varner
 5/08 David Wetzel
 5/11 Erin Goedegebuure
 5/12 Malcolm Derk, III, Soren Kershner
 5/13 Rick Krex, Darin Namminga
 5/14 Gail Fischer
 5/17 Connie Erdley, Lucy Wenrich
 5/19 Debra Brown, Hunter Carper, Shannon Walter
 5/20 Kim Campbell, Reed McCabe, Grayson Taylor
 5/22 Wendy Mull
 5/23 Jillian Haddon
 5/24 Matthew Kelly, Jan Sears
 5/25 Stacey Gemberling, Randy Laniewski,
 Kyle Martin
 5/26 Bradley Berger, Jeremy Brouse, Penny Dollar,
 Lorene Eaton, Sienna Kershner
 5/27 Carisa Kreitzer, Anna Long, John Probst,
 Linda Turner
 5/28 Carol Drumheiser, Michael Weader, III
 5/29 Cullen Straub
 5/30 Sally Lauer, Eveline Straub
 5/31 Ethel Foor, David Lauer, Jr.

5/01 Missy & Jake McCabe
 5/06 Joe & Mindy Martin
 5/10 Talisha & John Probst, Jack & Jan Riegel
 5/13 Jacob & Angela Smith
 5/14 Brooke & James Manley, III, Justin & Erin
 Smith
 5/17 Laura & Patrick Fetterman
 5/18 Craig & Victoria Stark
 5/22 Matthew & Heidi Beaver, Jeff & Debra Smith
 5/24 Lori & Scott Kershner, Scott & Darlene
 Newman
 5/28 Jon Hanson & Kate Morse
 5/29 Dan & Tami Herrold, William & Brenda
 Hockenbrock

If your birthday or anniversary is in May and is not listed, please call the church office at 570-374-8749.

Loaves and Fishes

Thank you to everyone who gives of their time to help with Loaves and Fishes. Help is needed with the **next distribution on Friday, May 29** from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Numbers for March 27, 2020:

Total # of families	98
Total # of children	63
Total # of adults	117
Total # of elderly	66
Total # of persons served	246

Prayer List

Members: Dot & Al Deans, Helen Hannah, Jimmy Kauffman, Jackie Naugle, Violet Remaley, Nancy Wagner.

Friends: Marilyn Baissa, Family of Carla Bless, Cora and family, Kevin Lahr, Tammy Morningstar, Rachel, Those affected by Covid-19: health care workers, nursing home residents and staff, those in leadership positions, those who keep us going by serving and working to make our lives bearable, All children who miss the hugs of their grandparents and all grandparents who miss the hugs of their grandchildren. 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.

(PRAYER LIST POLICY: For us to honor Prayer Request cards please seek permission from the person you desire prayers for and include your name on the card. Names will be left on for 30 days. If you wish to have someone put back on the Prayer List, another Prayer Request card needs to be filled out. Prayer Request cards are available in the pew pockets, and in the Church Office.)

Celebrating Holy Week and Easter at St. Paul's



Pastor Dietmar provides a message of hope on Palm Sunday.



Communion on Maundy Thursday.



Carolyn Patton plays the piano in worship on Easter Sunday.



St. Paul's sanctuary beautifully decorated for Easter Sunday.



Left:
Communion with Pastor Penny on Easter Sunday.

Right:
The colorful butterfly, a symbol of resurrection, was created by children of St. Paul's who colored individual segments before it was combined to a magnificent work of art.



Council Summary - April 14, 2020

In Attendance - John Fischer, Joanne Lauer, Carolyn Fairl, Pastor Dietmar, Jack Lewis, Stacy Heinemann, Ellen Miller, Richard Campbell, Susan Bolig, Raven Rudnitsky, Lisa Krex, Bev Heinemann, Marty Blessing, Robert Engel, Ivana Lluveras.

Excused - Peggy Peeler.

Financial Report - John Fischer gave a financial report. John and Marv Rudnitsky are looking into the transfer details for the Louise Long fund. We need to look into the details with regard to usage of the funds. We have \$1,200 so far for the new tables for Fellowship Hall. Marv is looking into whether or not the Louise Long fund was transferred to another fund as requested. We need to see if we can use it for current usage. We need to look into the Diane Shaffer bequest to see what that entails. We owe Bill Hockenbrock a debt of gratitude for doing the treasury input since Donna Long is not coming in.

Pastor's Report - We are deeply grateful for the tech team who were able to get us up and running with streaming church services the day after school closed. We couldn't do what we are doing now without the new technology. We can also use our website very efficiently. It is important to offer the Wednesday service as well. We are exploring how to be a congregation in this new time. We need to try to connect with people at this time. We don't want to lose contact with people.

Discussion Topics:

• **Help with online services** - Volunteers are needed to read the scriptures or give the children's message either in church or from home. Contact Dietmar or the Worship Committee to volunteer to read the scriptures. Contact Lois Bruno if you are interested in doing a children's

sermon.

• **Ongoing services** - We will continue with Wednesday and Sunday services. The Thursday chats will continue, but not the Monday chats. We can look into giving the children ideas to do at home for Messy Church. Stacy Heinemann is doing things weekly with the kids online and following the Sunday School curriculum.

• **What will the future look like** - We would like to be able to continue streaming when the church is open again, so that the sick and elderly can continue to attend the services online. We would also like to continue with our normal presentation for those in the sanctuary. A motion was made and approved to form a task force to look into what type of equipment would be needed to do both streaming and the regular presentation with the screens in the sanctuary.

• **Update on Staff** - Cindy Martin, Sue Nentwig, and Pastor Dietmar will be compensated going forward, because they are still working. All other employees will be paid for the work they did prior to the closing. We are going to apply for the CARES Acts fund money for the Payroll Protection Act. Staff members, who are not getting paid at this point, may also be applying for unemployment compensation.

A discussion was had to employ our custodian John for two hours a week to make sure the church is not in need of immediate attention. A motion was made and approved to employ John for two hours a week.

Carolyn Patton will be offered a small compensation to help with her gas expenditures for the services she plays for each week. A motion was made and approved to offer her \$20.00 a week compensation for playing for the Wednesday night and Sunday services.

Allen and David Wetzel will be mowing the lawn during this time.

• **Need for a Visitation Ministry**

Coordinator - Pastor Penny leaves at the end of April. We need to find someone to replace her. Since no one can visit currently, this will not impact us immediately. We should continue contacting people in the church to see how they are doing.

• **Suggestions for ongoing virtual ministry** - We are going to list the birthdays and anniversaries in the eNews each week, since there are no bulletins at this time.

Communication - Jamie Namminga won't be able to be our Joyful Noise director going forward. She has been promoted at Susquehanna University and will not have enough time to direct. We need to conduct a search to find a new director for the Joyful Noise Choir. We accept her resignation with regret.

Upcoming Dates - Look for information in the church emails.

Prayer Concerns - Gail Fischer's mother, Violet Remaley will be 97 on April 23rd. She is not doing as well as she could be. Cards would be appreciated.

Peggy Peeler's baby granddaughter Cora is being tested for a tumor. Prayers for her are needed.

Rachel, a friend, is in ICU on a ventilator with the Covid virus and not doing well.

We are going to elicit Letters to Jesus from the children and anyone else who wishes to send one.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joanne Lauer
Recording Secretary

Pastor's Report - March 2020

Our St. Paul's mission is to grow spiritually, to worship God, to serve others and to welcome all. The Selinsgrove schools closed on Friday, March 13, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and we had our first live stream running from St. Paul's sanctuary on Saturday, March 14, at 10:00 AM. That is an amazing accomplishment, made possible by Jevan Beaver and Sigrid Plajer, who started preparing for this on March 11 by researching what would be needed for keeping St. Paul's up and running to reach out electronically as a congregation.

Our Holy Scriptures and faith experiences speak clearly to our unsettling circumstances. We are called to be the church for such a time as this. Jesus calms the storm, Jesus rescues sinking Peter, God's Spirit breathes new life into a valley of dry bones, ... Jesus provides assurance and peace when we trust him, when we surrender to him. He promised to walk with us in and through the valley.

Since March 15 we have been offering two worship services per week, on Sundays at 10:30 AM and on Wednesdays at 7 PM. Carolyn Patton has been extravagantly generous in offering herself to play the piano for our Wednesday services. To prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, Church Council decided on March 17 to transition to online worship only.

Currently, we are sending out our electronic St. Paul's Good News twice per week to keep the congregation informed, grounded, and centered during these uncertain times.

I'm offering a casual meeting place to create community, a place to share thoughts, feelings, and experiences via Zoom on Monday and Thursday nights at 7 PM, which have been well received.

Church Council, Christian Education, and Stewardship and Fi-

nance meetings have been held electronically via Zoom.

Holy Week gave us special opportunities to include children, families, and individuals in our online worship services. The Waving of the Palm, the Scripture Readings, the Children's Messages, and the Special Music presentations have been outstanding.

Since we transitioned to online worship, several new people joined us in worship and appreciate our church's message of peace, faith, and hope.

The children and families from Messy Church, from Sunday school and Kid's Group helped color a magnificent butterfly, a symbol of Easter transformation and new life, which adorns the sanctuary.

Our Tech Team, Jevan Beaver and Sigrid Plajer (with the help of Felix Plajer), have implemented and are continuously improving the live streaming of our worship services. New equipment has been acquired, installed, tested, and is in use. Week by week we have seen improvements.

As Church Council and as a congregation we are trying to connect with all members and friends who are at risk of isolation.

We continue to offer our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry on March 27 with many new helpers and volunteers from our community. More than ever, Loaves and Fishes is vital for those in our community who need it most. Much time and energy went into making it an as-safe-as-possible event for volunteers and for clients. The drive-up and curbside pick-up distribution worked smoothly. Thanks to all who made this possible!

Church Council decided to transition to the email only distribution of our monthly Messenger newsletter to all those who have email. It will be mailed only to those who do not have electronic means to receive it.

Our congregation has experienced a significant drop in income since we transitioned to online worship only. Our office manager works with re-

duced hours, about 15 hours/week from previously about 30 hours, while our custodian is currently not working. Personnel, Finance, and Church Council are exploring how to proceed with the other employees considering the stay-at-home order from the PA Governor for all non-essential business, which went into effect on April 1.

The Selinsgrove Area Christian Council (SACC) Easter Food Distribution took place on April 3 and 4. I'm deeply grateful to all who donated food and dollars to SACC to make Easter for many families in need in our Selinsgrove area possible.

Marie Beard (96) passed away on March 10, and I officiated the funeral service for her on Saturday, March 21. Wayne Wetzel (83), the father of Allen Wetzel, died on March 18 and I officiated the service for Wayne on Saturday, March 28.

I am deeply grateful to all who continue to give generously to support St. Paul's mission and ministries and extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who increase their giving to ensure the vital mission and ministries of our beloved St. Paul's continues.

Thank you for your prayers, your witness, your giving, your service, and your faithfulness to God and to St. Paul's. You are the hands and the heart of Jesus in action!

Pastoral Activities

March 1– April 14, 2020

Days Worked	36
Days off	05
Cont. Ed. Days	00
Vacation	03
<u>Holidays</u>	<u>01</u>
Total Days	45

Respectfully submitted,

Dietmar Plajer

Dietmar Plajer,
Pastor and Teacher

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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Check it out on our website:
www.saintpauls-ucc.org

“God is Still Speaking”

Worship - Sundays 10:30 AM
- Wednesdays 7:00 PM

Change Service Requested

We thank God for...

Summer Worship schedule begins
on May 24.
Worship begins at 10:00 am;
no Sunday School.

Children, families, and friends waving palms and shouting Hosanna for Palm Sunday.

