



THE MESSENGER

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



**MUSIC APPRECIATION
SUNDAY MAY 8**

Join us on this special Sunday to appreciate our talented musicians.



Messy Church

Messy Church

May 8 at 4 PM

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION



MAY 15 AND 22



GRADUATION
Sunday CONGRATULATIONS!

**GRADUATE RECOGNITION
SUNDAY MAY 22**

Join us as we celebrate our graduates on this Sunday!



THE MEANING OF THE EASTER SEASON

Easter is much more than a day. It is a season. During this season I invite you to pay attention to the new life emerging around you and in you. The butterfly has been a symbol of the new resurrection life for ages. Like butterflies we are being transformed and emerge from cocoons, spread our wings and take flight.

We have great symbols in creation that reflect what Easter is about and how we can live like Easter people. It's the season when birds build their nests. I remember observing some birds building a nest in the wreath of our front door. We could see the intricate and delicately crafted nest as it emerged. Once the eggs were laid, it took the birds lots of patience to brood the eggs until they hatched into tiny chicks. Then, mama and papa bird were super busy to provide worms for their hungry little ones. These grew very quickly and soon they were fledglings and gone.

Imagine that you and I are encapsulated and confined like a chick in an egg. We are limited and may feel shackled

in some ways. There are pressures and fears that keep us small and constricted. Living like Easter people means to trust and to invite God's love to warm our hearts, encourage us to face our fears, help us hatch from our confining circumstances, spread our wings and take flight. What keeps you from coming out of your shell, from finding your voice, and from living boldly and courageously? God empowers and provides hope.

I love to observe young children. When I see a parent with a toddler, I pay close attention. Often, the child is shy and hides safely behind the parent's leg. Then, the toddler peaks out and hides again. A small peekaboo game ensues. "You don't have to be shy," the parent says. Still the game is on until the child feels more comfortable and safe enough to emerge from hiding.

Like children, we tend to hide parts of ourselves when we don't feel safe. We play a kind of "hide-and-seek" until we feel safe and welcome for being who we are. Once we know and trust that we are

welcomed, loved, and affirmed, we come out of hiding, emerge, and find our voice.

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul uses the image of giving birth to describe our situation as people of faith. It is painful and we suffer in the process. We are squeezed, stressed, and overwhelmed. But in all of that we are in hope for the new life that is being born. Suffering and pain are part of our faith journey. God can use them to give birth to new life.

I invite you to participate in our Easter Season services, Music Appreciation Sunday, Messy Church, the National Day of Prayer, and Graduate Recognition Sunday as we continue to hatch, break free, are being born and re-born, grow wings, and take flight as resurrection people. The Living God is at work in us to bring about new life. That gives me hope!

Faithfully yours,

Pastor Dietmar



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL JUNE 6-10, 5:30-7:30 PM

Let's work together to care for creation! It's time to register for **ReNew: The Green VBS!**

Place: St. Paul's UCC

Dates: June 6-10

Time: 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

ReNew VBS invites kids to learn about Jesus, help build our community, and grow as they become stewards of God's creation. Calling all kids in grades

K-5 who want to ReNew! Let's grow in faith, have fun, and change the world!

Registration is going on now. Click [here](#) to register for VBS!

Want to know how you can get involved? Email Torri Stark (youth@saintpauls-ucc.org) or click [here](#) to volunteer and Torri will contact you.



UPCYCLE DONATIONS FOR VBS NEEDED

We are looking for the following items to use at our ReNew Vacation VBS. Please bring the items to the coat room.

- empty cereal boxes
- shoe boxes
- old greeting cards
- cardboard boxes
- gallon milk jugs
- 2-liter soda bottles
- newspapers
- Pringles cans (w/lid)
- clean plastic bottles (hand-held w/lid)
- empty coffee cans
- empty oatmeal containers (cardboard w/lid)
- 8"x 10" fleece
- 10" x 10" fleece
- magazines
- tissue paper
- clear glass bottles w/narrow neck
- pinecones
- rocks (various sizes - not too big)
- paper grocery bags
- empty ice cream buckets (or similar size)
- 20-30 feet of strong rope (for tug-of-war)

The following items please bring to church beginning June 1:

- sticks
- pea pods
- leaves
- twigs
- grass
- branches

MAY MESSY CHURCH: PILLAR OF COMFORT



TEEN GROUP

Nine teens attended the Teen Group meeting on April 24. Everybody had a great time getting to know more about each other and brainstorming activities and topics for future meetings. Stay tuned...



SUNDAY SCHOOL

We will wrap up our year learning about Jesus' ascension to heaven and the apostle Paul. Thank you to everyone who helped me on Sunday mornings. I have really enjoyed working with our youngest members and getting to know them!



KIDS GROUP

As the school year winds down, our Wednesday after school program will, too. Many thanks to Linda Turner, Sigrid Plajer, Marty Blessing, Kimmie Burkhart, and Josh Wenrich who volunteered their time week after week to make sure the program could continue when I couldn't be there.



Come to our May Messy Church! We will discover the God who draws close at our darkest times and leads us through to the future God has planned. We celebrate the comfort God brings us, and explore what it means to put our trust in God and

follow God's guiding. All are invited! Hope you can come and join the fun! Please sign up here!





MAY



BIRTHDAYS

- 5/01 Mark Minier
- 5/02 Camden Smith
Aubryana Zettlemoyer
- 5/03 Lyle Mercer
- 5/04 Linda Bowers
Ann Leitzel
- 5/05 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 Randy Laniewski
- 5/26 Bradley Berger
Jeremy Brouse
Rev. Penny Dollar
Lorene Eaton
- 5/27 Sienna Kershner
Carisa Kreitzer
Anna Long
John Probst
Linda Turner
- 5/28 Carol Drumheiser
- 5/29 Cullen Straub
- 5/30 Sally Lauer
Eveline Straub
- 5/31 Davie Lauer, Jr.

PRAYER LIST

Members:

- Kim Haizlett
- David & Helen Hannah
- Candice Hinckley
- Gibby Mease
- Jack Riegel
- Kathy Ulrich

Friends:

- Larry Britton
- Pastor Karis Hagen
- Karen Koble
- Anna Ogunnaike
- The family of Gladys Roush
- Rev. Mary Schmotzer
- Ken & Robin Shick
- Bobbie Jo Sprenkle

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

Special prayers for all those who are serving in the military, leaders of the world, those who are working for peace and understanding, and all the children of the world

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Parishioners of St. Paul's,
 I want to personally thank you for your generosity as a co-sponsor for the 2021 Days of Remembrance essay contest. Your contribution will impact the essay contest for years, if not decades, as each participant receives a frameable certificate signed by members of our board and co-sponsors. I see student participation like some of my personal life experiences. Many ideas for me were like seeds that germinated at different times and initiated or reinforced moral courage and resilience.

The certificate recognizes students for "demonstrating leadership, historical analysis, research, creativity and skilled writing." Additionally, it quotes,

"This award is in accordance with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Act 70, signed into law in 2014 by Governor Tom Corbett and the General Assembly: 'To provide children with an understanding of the importance of the protection of human rights and the potential consequences of unchecked ignorance, discrimination and persecution, it is a matter of high priority that the children of this Commonwealth, be educated concerning the Holocaust, genocide and other human rights violations.'"

Sincerely,
 David Young
 President, Days of Remembrance

Dear St. Paul's United Church of Christ,
 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 \$1,646.50 on 12-31-21 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 cloth-

ing 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 Zeigler
 Executive Director



A National Day of Prayer Service will be held on Thursday, May 5, 6:00 PM at Christ Community United Methodist Church, 3939 Park Rd., Selinsgrove. Various churches will offer leadership as we sing and pray together for the areas of government, military, media, business, education, family and church. Light refreshments will be available throughout the evening for people to come and go as needed. We look forward to joining together in worship and prayer as one body in Christ!



LOAVES AND FISHES

January

Families 74
 Children 37
 Adults 71
 Seniors 66
 Total served 174

February

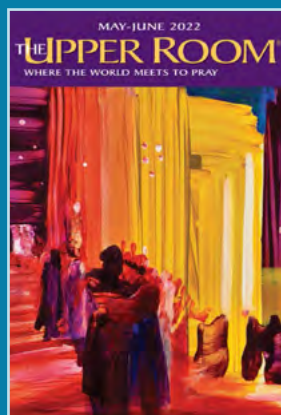
Families 53
 Children 34
 Adults 46
 Seniors 52
 Total served 132

March

Families 62
 Children 31
 Adults 45
 Seniors 64
 Total served 140

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

A faith-based cancer support group meets the 3rd Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at Wesley United Methodist Church, 300 Rhoads Avenue, Selinsgrove (next to the high school football field). For more information contact Merrie Parker at 570-850-4423 or Kelly Crissinger at 570-743-4306. All are welcome.



UPPER ROOM

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.

THANK YOU NOTE

We received a thank you note from Anna Ogunnaike whom we continue to wrap in prayers and love. Anna's husband Tunde Ogunnaike died recently. You, the members and friends of St. Paul's and the Card and Care Ministry Team faithfully supported and prayed for Tunde and Anna who are connected to Shane Sanders. Anna shared in worship on Easter Sunday how much it meant to her and to her family to know that people cared, lifted them up in prayer, and assured them of God's goodness and grace.

Dear Pastor Dietmar and friends at St. Paul's,

Thank you for your steady stream of love and encouragement! Your love brightened our darkest days!

Anna Ogunnaike

(In addition to Anna's personal note, the card reads: "You're one of God's most special gifts. God brings people into our lives who see with the most understanding eyes, encourage with the most gentle words, and love with the most caring heart. So grateful for the gift of you!")

MAY

ANNIVERSARIES

- 5/01 Missy & Jake McCabe
- 5/10 Talisha & John Probst
Jack & Jan Riegel
- 5/13 Jacob & Angela Smith
- 5/14 Justin & Erin Smith
- 5/18 Craig & Victoria Stark
- 5/22 Matthew & Heidi Beaver
Jeff & Debra Smith
Daria & Ty Richline
- 5/24 Lori & Scott Kershner
- 5/29 Dan & Tami Herrold
William & Brenda Hockenbrock

ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 12, 2022

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.

Attendance: Sara Adams, Kim Burkhart, Amy Caron, Bev Heinemann, Peggy Peeler, Pastor Dietmar Plajer, Sigrid Plajer as guest, Shane Sanders, Randy Tanner, Linda Turner, Josh Wenrich, Allen Wetzel.

Excused: Bob Engel, Craig Stark, Kathy Ulrich, Mike Zettlemoyer.

Minutes from March Council: Minutes were sent earlier via email by Randy Tanner; no changes were noted. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Bev Heinemann, seconded by Linda Turner, and the motion was approved.

Financial Report: The report was sent earlier via email. Linda Turner highlighted some of the figures outlined. A motion to approve the financial report was made by Randy Tanner and seconded by Allen Wetzel. The motion was approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dietmar sent out his report earlier via email. He expanded briefly on the items in his report to Council.

Unfinished Business & New Business

VBS: Torri Stark announced the theme for this year's VBS is Re-New-The Green VBS; it will be held June 6-10 from 5:30-7:30 PM. The program involves teaching the kids to care for God's creation and emulate using as many recyclables as possible. The daily programs focus on Self, Community, and World. The planning meeting for VBS will be at the church on Wednesday 4/20 from 5:30-7:30 PM. Torri will be asking for donations for some items they're using. Volunteers are needed in many capacities. Please contact Torri to join the fun! A new teen youth group is forming! A planning meeting is scheduled for April 24, from 5:30-7:30 at the church. In addition to our youth we hope to include youth from the community and friends of St. Paul's.

Worship Service: The mask changes were well received and we had wonderful participation at our Palm Sunday Service with 109 people attending! Discussion ensued about a suggestion to possibly return to our pre-Covid communion protocol of using individual cups and bread. Noting the recent surges in new Covid cases, we will re-visit this suggestion at our next meeting. Some guests have not been following the new safe space guidelines in the balcony. Council wishes to maintain this policy to keep more vulnerable guests safe. In our planning for St. Paul's Vision, Pastor Dietmar has e-mailed Carrie Call, our Conference Minister. We ask for her assistance and/or other Conference staff to assist us, using their skills, to help us

in discerning St. Paul's Vision for the future. We're anticipating a fall or spring timeline to integrate the new ideas. Much positive feedback was received of the Easter Cards mailed out to our faith family! With Pastor Dietmar's Sabbatical leave fast approaching, Rev. Darin Namminga has agreed to cover most of the Sunday services. Rev. Darin requested that an agreement of duties of a Sabbatical Minister be drawn up for clarity in his responsibilities. An agreement was created that was accepted and signed by Rev. Namminga.

Personnel Committee Report: Linda Turner noted that there are currently 4 applicants for the Office Manager position. We are still searching for someone for the Treasurer position. The new Kids Group Helper, Mercedes Nadal, is a great asset as she works very well with the children. A request was forwarded from the Finance Committee about raising the Kids Group Helper salary from \$10.00 to \$12.36/hour in the fall. Her upcoming job review would hopefully result in her receiving the new hourly rate. A motion to accept the pay increase was made by Sara Adams and seconded by Allen Wetzel. Motion was approved.

Messy Church: A good time was had by all attending Messy Church on April 10th with 60 people attending! The next Messy Church is scheduled for May 8. With summer, the team will take a break, returning in September.

Adult Sunday School: The class will meet on April 24th to discuss the Holy Week devotions. Our class leaders continue to research materials to be the subject of our next series. A shout-out to our class leaders Marty Blessing and Lois Bruno for their great leadership, no matter what books are chosen!

Kids Group & Children's Sunday School: Kids Group continues to be a positive experience for all involved. The Education Committee will soon be considering new materials for the return of children's class in the fall.

Confirmation Group: The class, with some members of St. Paul's tagging along, visited the Synagogue in Sunbury after a meal of pizza and snacks. Rabbi Nina Mandel gave all a tour of the building and shared some of their rich history with the group and answered many questions. The group all agreed it was a great experience.

Visitation Ministry Group Leader: The search is ongoing; boy do we miss Pastor Penny!

Day of Remembrance Essay Contest: The winning essays will be shared on St. Paul's website as soon as they become available.

Church Council Vacancy: Council has decided to forego searching for a replacement for Ivanna Lluveras' unexpired term as they will be starting the search for all the members whose term expires December 31 in the near future.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES CONTINUED

Vacation: Pastor Dietmar has requested vacation time April 18-24. A motion was made by Linda Turner and seconded by Kim Burkhart. Motion was approved.

Summer Worship Time: There was a short discussion about going back to our usual summer worship time of 10:00 AM. A motion to approve the time change was made by Randy Tanner and seconded by Joshua Wenrich. The motion was approved. However, the time change will not start until June 12th, due to Confirmation Sunday being on Pentecost, June 5th.

New Members: Some guests are interested in joining St. Paul's with possibly a few more. The service for new members to join is scheduled for June 5th, Pentecost Sunday. An orientation meeting is scheduled for May 15th and May 22nd following the worship service for all those interested in joining and their sponsors.

Committee Reports

Property and Grounds: In the search for a better remote entry system at the Mill St. entrance, two systems are being considered. Both include an app to download on the phones of those people needing access to the building. One system also includes a tracking system to log those people giving access to groups/committees/ events. The Finance Committee has given a recommendation of up to \$6,000.00 for Council's approval of a new system. A motion was made by Allen Wetzell and seconded by Bev Heinemann to purchase the system that features the log feature. The motion was approved. Issues with the bridal store rental property were brought to Mike Proger's attention. The issues include a blackish residue (possibly black mold) on areas near the bathroom and the bathroom broken apart. A budget item exists, with \$8,389 available for funding rental property repairs. Mike is assessing the damage and making temporary repairs, if possible. Council has recommended hiring an inspector to assess the damage and the feasibility of investing more money in the rental property. A suggestion was made to compensate Mike Proger for his time researching and

possible repairs he needs to make. This suggestion was well received and will be continued as we learn more about the repair costs. An individual to perform an Independent Energy Analysis was referred to council to have a qualified impartial decision made to determine our actual needs in purchasing a new furnace. Bids are being submitted for the outdoor concrete repairs to be made. A suggestion was made to remind persons using the building to be better stewards in noticing and turning off lights accidentally left on in the building.

Living into Right Relationships (LRR)/Green Team: Appreciation was given to Peggy Peeler for volunteering to take meeting minutes for the group! Ongoing meetings reference the continued ongoing planning to bring PFLAG Selinsgrove to fruition along with continued social justice issues, recycling/renewal and input on the upcoming furnace purchase.

Stewardship and Finance: The committee has made a suggestion to compensate Linda Turner for her covering the vacant church secretary position. Discussion followed highlighting the unanimous appreciation for the work Linda Turner has been doing. This suggestion was approved for Linda Turner, although she contends that she wants to do this voluntarily.

Next Council Meeting is scheduled for May 10, 2022, at 7 PM. Bob Engel will provide devotions. Prayer concerns were expressed, and the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Important Dates:

- Loaves and Fishes - April 29, 9-11 and 12:30-2 PM
- Messy Church - May 8, 4 PM
- Music Appreciation Sunday - May 8
- Graduate Recognition Sunday - May 22
- Pentecost and Confirmation Service - June 5
- Hot Topics start in Fall 2022

Respectfully submitted,
Randy Tanner, Council Secretary



PASTOR'S REPORT MARCH 2022

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

People who have had a brush with death live differently. To become aware of our mortality and, as a result, to live more wisely and meaningfully, was the focus of our Ash Wednesday. With clergy colleagues, I offered "Ashes to God" at the Selinsgrove Commons from 9-5. About 85 people stopped by to receive ashes. Many of them nailed prayers to the big wooden cross, reflecting on what holds them back, where they feel stuck, and what they want to let go. One person attached a sunflower to the cross, an expression of our prayerful support for the people of Ukraine in their horrible suffering from the war that Russia is waging against them. It is an incredible tragedy of death and destruction.

"Gifts of the Dark: Blessings for the Soul" was the theme of the worship series we focused on during this Lenten Season. Generally, we experience dark and painful experiences as dreadful and to be avoided at all costs. Yet that is not possible. Sunday by Sunday we explored how experiences of failure, emptiness, uncertainty, disorientation, and suffering can become spaces where we connect more deeply with Jesus and awaken to the reality that God can be found in the dark.

The art-installation at the front of the sanctuary is drawing us in through its bare branches, rocks, and the wooden cross. It is a wonderful visual reflection of the theme. Thank you to the worship team for this meaningful installation!

"How to Fight Racism" was the theme of the Thursday evening group study that concluded on March 17. We explored together, based on a DVD curriculum by Jemar Tisby, how we as people of faith can work toward equity and inclusion. Jesus' focus is on those people who live at the margins, are treated unfairly, are excluded, and disadvantaged. Our country has a long history of racism, inequality, and oppression. Churches have mostly been complicit by remaining silent about the injustices, and not advocating for people of color. We explored together how we can acknowledge and right the wrongs of the past through awareness, relationships, and commitment to racial justice and equality.

Evaluating Our Common Congregational Ministries: The Personnel Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Council President, and I, Pastor Dietmar, met for the second time to evaluate our common ministries. I am exhausted and overwhelmed by the weight of ministry through the last two pandemic years. We are exploring how to re-set priorities,

ask for more help from the congregation at large, and to shift responsibilities. We need the help and support of every member and friend of St. Paul's. We are also exploring how a part-time associate pastor may be able to help. I am ready for my summer sabbatical from June 6-September 5.

Our Office Manager, Sue Nentwig, left St. Paul's to pursue different opportunities. Her last day in the office was March 17. We expressed our heartfelt gratitude to Sue for her 11+ years of faithful and dedicated service. We will miss her much. I am very grateful that Linda Turner is filling in at the church office. She is doing a phenomenal job in helping us through the transition.

Messy Church focused on March 13 on the Parable of the Mustard Seed. As the tiniest mustard seed grows into a mighty tree in which birds nest, so God's realm is growing among us, when we open our hearts and grow with it. Crafts, games, and activities made the message tangible. Messy Church is a key ministry of St. Paul's for all ages with 40-50 persons participating on a monthly basis. Thank you to all who volunteer to make it happen!

The Living into Right Relationships Team (LRR) continues to explore how we can



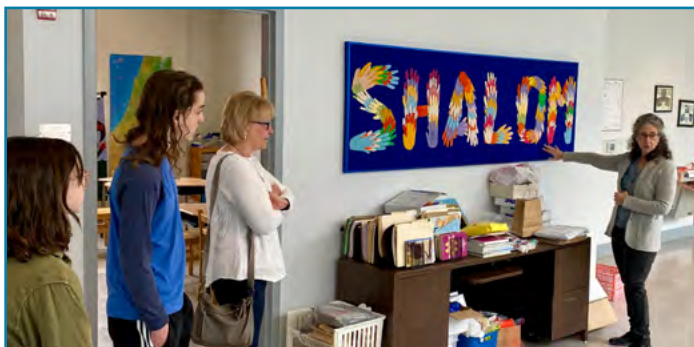
integrate our commitment to sustainability, diversity, equality, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. The LLR Team advocates for persons who identify as LGBTQ+ in Selinsgrove and is working towards establishing a PFLAG support group in town. The intent and goal of the LRR Team is to help all of us become more Christ-like. I am grateful to all who participate in and support the mission of the LRR team, and

specifically to Shane Sanders for chairing the team. 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!

March 1-31, 2022

Days worked	21
Days off	07
Continuing Education	00
Vacation days	03
Holidays	00
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



SABBATICAL OF PASTOR DIETMAR

I am looking forward to my sabbatical renewal time from June 6 - September 5. For most of the Sundays and for pastoral care concerns, Rev. Darin Namminga will be filling in. Rev. Namminga is well known to you and I trust him to be thoughtful, caring, and diligent in providing the best pastoral leadership possible. During my sabbatical time, Rev. Darin Namminga can be reached by email darinnamminga@gmail.com and on his cell phone: (605) 929-6495. There are times when Rev. Namminga will be traveling and we will have a colleague of mine be available for pastoral care emergencies. You will receive more information on that in the next newsletter and via our weekly Friday eNews emails, the Sunday Announcement Sheet, and via the church office. Rev. Namminga will cooperate closely with our church secretary, the Council President, Peggy Peeler, and will also be

available in the church office.

During my sabbatical time, I will focus on spiritual renewal. I booked a week at a Franciscan Retreat Center in the Philadelphia area. I am planning to go on retreat to Mt. Saviour Monastery in upstate New York, will be reading, participating in workshops, and connecting and learning from colleagues in ministry. And yes, I will be traveling, too, together with Sigrid. There is so much to learn, explore, and grow from spiritually and as pastor. Like in other professions and organizations, one of the best things leaders can do is to keep learning, growing and developing. I want to return in September refreshed and energized with new ideas and a clearer vision for ministry for the next five years.

- Pastor Dietmar



St. Paul's United Church of Christ

400 North Market Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Tel 570-374-8749

office@saintpauls-ucc.org

www.saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM

(Summer Worship at 10:00 AM beginning with June 12)

also on Facebook, YouTube, or our website

“God is Still Speaking”

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...



Messy Church on Palm Sunday was a blast! Join us on May 8 at 4 PM!