



THE MESSENGER

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



NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

May 7 at 11:45 in the Meeting Room





HOW GOD'S SPIRIT IS MOVING AMONG US

On Saturday, April 29, St. Paul's hosted the Annual Meeting of our Central Association (St. Paul's is one of the 36 UCC churches in the Central Association of the Penn Central Conference). Representatives from the participating congregations carried and placed a candle on the communion table in our sanctuary. The various candles, tall and short, big and skinny, plain and ornate, with holders or without, represented every participant and every church. "Fanning the Flames: Fully Alive" was the theme of the meeting. I could feel the spirit moving among the gathered, by looking at the glow of the candles and by singing, "It only takes a spark to get the fire going." Jesus encourages us, "Let your light shine!" The eternal light in our sanctuary reminds us of that. Every one of us has an inner light which reflects God's light in us. Dr. Michael Gibbs, a church consultant from the UCC Penn Central Conference, guided the association in a visioning process. It was a meaningful gathering that reflected God's Spirit moving among us.

I'm touched by the excitement and positive energy of our "For Our Future" Visioning and Strategic Planning process for our beloved St. Paul's congregation. Everyone from our congregation was invited to participate. As we met on April 11 with our Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, we decided on specific

goals in the categories of Passionate Engagement, Authentic Welcome, Spiritual Growth, and Faithful Service. We want to explore some new worship elements for the younger generation, expand our hospitality with great coffee and goodies on Sunday mornings, feature some of our beloved long-term church members in our newsletter, and draw in more Susquehanna students. Also, we need additional staff, an associate pastor. We want to explore whether and how we can use the Kind Cafe for some evening events for spiritual growth for people who will not come to the church. We are a vital and vibrant congregation with a bright future if we bundle our energy and move forward. God's Spirit is moving among us.

Our Music Sunday on May 7 will be exhilarating! It is amazing how much talent we have and how dedicated our musicians are. It is truly uplifting and inspiring to participate in the music, to tune in and to let God touch our hearts through lyrics, melodies, and movements. I'm excited about this highlight Sunday. God's Spirit is moving among us through the amazing music. As we tune into the music, we feel the Spirit in our bodies, minds, and souls. God's Spirit is moving among us.

I will be facilitating a New Member

Orientation in May, beginning with Sunday, May 7 right after worship. We have a group of dedicated prospective members who want to join and make a commitment to our vision, mission and ministries: Stacy and Jacob Koch, Jared Roush, and RuthMary Shaffer. A couple others may want to still participate in the orientation and explore membership. People are drawn in by our extravagant welcome and inclusion. The new members are scheduled to join our congregation on Pentecost Sunday, May 28. It is the Sunday of the Spirit, the fire, the breath of God, energizing, empowering, making us come fully alive. God's Spirit is moving among us.

The wonderful "Meet and Eat" lunch after worship on the last Sunday of the month has been a great success with many people participating. I have seen long-term members and new ones connect, young and senior members share over the meal, and I hope that we are building new relationships and deepening existing ones. I feel God's Spirit moving among us at Meet and Eat.

I invite you to pay attention to the movements of God's Spirit in your life and at St. Paul's. We have so much potential. I invite each and everyone of you to come together to build a better St. Paul's. God's Spirit is moving among us. How will you open up, tune in, and participate in the Spirit's movements among us and beyond us?

Yours,

Pastor Dietmar

P.S.: You can reach me directly with any questions or concerns by email, dietmar@saintpauls-ucc.org, or by calling the church office or my cell phone. I'm always willing to meet with you in person and listen.

FROM TORRI, OUR YOUTH LEADER



KIDS NIGHT OUT

The April KNO was a great success. Many thanks to Kimmie Burkhart & Maureen Lewis for their help! The last KNO will be on Saturday, May 6 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Pentecost will be the topic, and if the weather cooperates, we will enjoy some outdoor activities! Please sign up [here](#) by Friday, May 5. Hope to see you there!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will wrap up on May 21 with an end-of-year celebration. The kids have enjoyed the Holy Moly lessons and videos, and I have enjoyed helping them grow in faith. Sunday School will resume in September with a whole new Holy Moly curriculum!



TEEN GROUP

Our final Teen Group meeting will be on May 21st after church. We will enjoy each other's company over lunch and engage in some friendly competition for coveted Starbucks gift cards. Bring some friends and [join us](#) for the last get-together before summer break!



OPERATION RESTORATION VBS JULY 10 TO 14 FROM 5:30 TO 7:30 P.M.

Operation Restoration is Monday, July 10 through Friday, July 14 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. each day. We will be mending God's world by exploring a different theme each day: feed, heal, forgive, pray, and rest. Mark your calendars now - more information about signing up and volunteering coming soon!



MAY BIRTHDAYS



- 5/01 Mark Minier
RuthMary Shaffer
- 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
Sienna Kershner
- 5/27 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

Charlotte Barben and Family
The Family of Donald Beaver
The Family of Mary Bolig
The Family of Kenny Bollinger
The Family of Gayle Dively
Donald
The Family & Friends of Helen Edmonds
The Father of Emily Garcia
Hilda Hahn
Dena Holland-Neal
The M Family
Dean Raker
Jack Riegel & Family
John Rothermel

Bobby Shelly
The Family of Lee Sholley
Janet Stephens
The Susquehanna University Community
All who keep working in critical situations, especially the health care workers
All who are grieving
Those in leadership positions
Our country - for peace, respect, understanding
Those who are dear and close to our hearts and those not named above
The people of Ukraine and all those suffering from the raging war

THANK YOU NOTES

From Brenda & Bill Hockenbrock:

Dear friends at St. Paul's, as Brenda and I enter a new life of transition, thank you all for the many meaningful,

heart-warming cards and phone calls and for the lovely prayer shawls. All have given us both warmth and encouragement. Thank you and God Bless.

From Amelia Price:

On behalf of the UCC Central Association, which is comprised of 36 area UCC congregations, the Rev. Amelia Price expresses her heartfelt appreciation to St. Paul's UCC overall and specifically to Susan Bolig and the Hospitality Team and to Jevan Beaver and Sigrid Plajer (the Tech

Team) for hosting the Annual Meeting of the association on Saturday, April 29. It was a great success! All participants felt comfortable and well cared for. Those joining the meeting via Zoom had a great experience.

Thank you, St. Paul's!

LOAVES AND FISHES

March 2023

Total families 98
Children 47
Adults 82
Seniors 93
Total served 222

April 2023

Total families 101
Children 44
Adults 85
Seniors 99
Total served 228

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
- 5/24 Lori & Scott Kershner
- 5/29 Dan & Tami Herrold
William & Brenda Hockenbrock



EASTER FLOWERS & NON-LILY MINISTRY FOR HOFFMAN HOMES

EASTER FLOWERS PRESENTED BY:

Caroline Antes

Susan Bolig - In Honor of my children and grandchildren

Amy Caron - In Honor of our beloved parents, Marv & Raven Rudnitsky

Deb & Terry Burns

Leon Fetterolf - In Honor of Mary and In Memory of Carol

Chyrl Gemberling - In Honor of Greg, Kim, Steve & Kara and In Memory of Kirby

Beverly & Fritz Heinemann - In Honor of our daughters, Karen, Deb & Stacy, and our grandchildren

Lisa Krex - In Memory of my Mother, Janet

Maureen Lewis

Carol Miller - In Honor of Barb Stanke and In Memory of Dolly Klingler

Ruth Mary Shaffer - In Memory of Jason E. & A. Kathryn Schaeffer

Verlyn Smith - In Honor of Randy Tanner and In Memory of Tressa & Dale Kline

Barbara Stanke - In Memory of Evelyn Gossen & Verne Stanke

Linda Turner - In Honor of Craig Stark

Kathy Ulrich - In Memory of her Parents, Bill & Faye Minier

Margaret Weirick - In Memory of Bruce & Cornelia Weirick

NON-LILY MINISTRY FOR HOFFMAN HOMES PRESENTED BY:

Charlotte Barben & Susan Harman - In Memory of Edward S. Barben

Ray Benner & Family - In Memory of Betsy Benner

Lamar & Sue Henise - In Memory of Stanley, Georgina & Judy Wagner

Carol Miller - In Honor of Charles & Dolly Klingler

Barb Stanke, Ray Klingler & Carol

Miller - In Memory of Dolly Klingler

Linda Turner - In Memory of Clara DeWolfe

Bill & Mary Ann Weader - In Honor of our children & grandchildren and In Memory of Tom & Kate Valunas, Mike & Kippy Weader, Madelyn Valunas, Midge Rowell, Joel Signor

THANK YOU NOTES

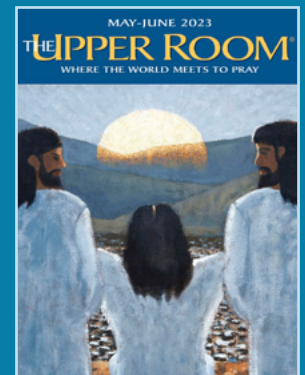


Vivian and Terry Beaver express their heartfelt gratitude for all the congratulations, love, and care you extended to Vivian on the occasion of her 80th birthday. Thank you!

On April 1, 2023, St. Paul's Church participated in the SACC Easter food distribution. St. Paul's served food baskets to three families. These families included 6 adults and 11 children. Along with food, a \$25 Boscov's gift card was included for each child under 18 years of age.

Thanks to all who support this outreach of St. Paul's Church.

Donnell Kelly, Ministry Committee



UPPER ROOM

You can pick up the Upper Room Devotional at the church, Tuesday to Thursday, 9-2. If you cannot pick up your copy, please call the church office at 570-374-8749.

ST. PAUL'S COUNCIL MEETING APRIL 11, 2023

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

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

Excused: Josh Wenrich.

Minutes of March Meeting: The March meeting minutes were approved with no changes.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dietmar highlighted the Meet & Eat gathering, the current worship series "Looking for Love" and our "For Our Future" visioning sessions. He noted that our Council meeting would be brief as our next session is 7:00 PM with Rev. Dr. Carrie Call.

Financial Report: The March Financial Reports were sent out in advance of the meeting and were approved as submitted with no concerns.

Visitation Ministry Coordinator: Pastor Dietmar reported that he would be meeting with two people who had expressed an interest in the position.

Church Safety Plan: Nothing new to report.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee met with two companies to receive proposals for our investments which are currently with UC Funds.

Property & Grounds: Rocky Baer, architect, will be starting

work soon on developing plans for the concrete work. With lawn-mowing and yard maintenance, John Rothermel requested 2 additional hours per week, for a total of 18 hours per week and this was approved by Council.

Safe Church Policy: For the Nursery, the policy states two adults with clearances are required. Since it is difficult to find Nursery attendants during the summer, a request was made to have one adult, with clearances, and one high-schooler in the Nursery with the high-schooler being paid the same as Nursery attendants. This is tabled to the May meeting.

Who Are We as St. Paul's Family? May 7, after the worship service, there will be a meeting in the fellowship hall to address questions, listen, understand, and clarify conversations on who we are, what we stand for, about PFLAG, etc. Pastor Dietmar will facilitate the conversation. -- *Note that this has been canceled since then.*

Communion May 7: Class of '24 will serve - Kim Burkhart, Randy Tanner, Josh Wenrich, and Allen Wetzel. Allen Wetzel, as Class of '24 Captain, will coordinate.

Summer Worship: Council approved summer worship time of 10:00 AM beginning Memorial Day weekend (May 28th) through Labor Day weekend (September 3rd).

Council adjourned at 7:00 PM to join the Visioning session with Rev. Dr. Carrie Call.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Turner

Council Secretary



Our second "Meet and Eat" community lunch after worship on Sunday, April 30 was a great success. We had around 45 persons participate. Many new relationships were established and existing ones deepened. It was a wonderful atmosphere of joy and sharing. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the three wonderful organizers, Beverly Heinemann, Christine Jaegers, and Peggy Peeler. Also to all those who helped set and decorate the tables, prepared delicious desserts, and washed the dishes and cleaned up. It was an amazing event, the perfect opportunity to grow and deepen relationships.

VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-2024

I am excited about the potential and wonderful opportunities for ministry we have. I am very grateful to all who participated in our visioning process and ask all of you to get engaged in one of the goals we want to achieve. We need you and we want you. We are together in this.



On April 11 we met with the Rev. Dr. Carrie Call to continue the work on our strategic plan for St. Paul's. We categorized the vision elements we gathered in March, captured objectives, spelled out details, and established responsibilities about who will work on implementing the various aspects of the plan. Meet and Eat is already very successful with Peggy Peeler, Chris Jaegers, and Bev Heinemann as planning team and with the support of many helpers. For the Sunday after Labor Day, September 10, we are planning a Block Party to engage our community. We need people who are willing to participate in team planning the

Block Party, for this specific event only. We are exploring new forms of worship with various age groups and want to engage persons from Generation Z. In focussing on the authentic welcome, we want to offer great coffee and tea before worship. Church Council is looking into additional staff, an associate pastor. We want to interview church members about their experiences from St. Paul's and their "God moments" (where and how they notice God at work) and feature them in our newsletter and in video clips. We are exploring to offer in the fall a Bible study based on The First Nations Version, a newly published translation of

the New Testament from Native American perspective. And we want to draw in more Susquehanna University students. Ruth-Mary Shaffer has been establishing vibrant connections on campus and in the community and has offered rides for students from and back to SU. We have big plans and much positive energy. I am excited about the potential and wonderful opportunities for ministry we have. I am very grateful to all who participated in our visioning process and ask all of you to get engaged in one of the goals we want to achieve. We need you and we want you. We are together in this.

Yours, Pastor Dietmar



GRADUATE RECOGNITION MAY 21

Graduate Recognition, May 21 - We will recognize in worship those from our congregation who will graduate this year from high school and from college during our worship service on May 21 at 10:30 a.m. Join us as we celebrate the graduates and their achievements, bless them, and wish them Godspeed for the next steps on their journey.



PENTECOST SUNDAY MAY 28, 10 A.M.

We invite you to wear something red, orange, or yellow for our Pentecost Sunday as we explore the fire, energy, and power of the Holy Spirit who fills our hearts, inspires us, and sets us on fire to be witnesses of the living God. During this service we will have a group of new members officially join St. Paul's.



CASUAL SUMMER

Some people who are new to St. Paul's wonder what they should wear for Sunday worship. The best answer is, what you feel most comfortable in. During the summer months, Pastor Dietmar will refrain from wearing a robe. As you wish, you can use this time for yourself to dress more casually and comfortably, too.

PASTOR'S REPORT - MARCH 2023

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

Our first Meet and Eat gathering over lunch following our worship service on March 26 was a great success. We had about 35 persons present who enjoyed true community. Souls were nurtured, spirits lifted, and bodies fed. The decorations and setup were amazing! Thanks to the planning team (Beverly Heine-mann, Peggy Peeler, and Christine Jaegers) and all the helpers and cooks who made Meet and Eat possible!

We continued with our "Looking for Love" worship theme exploring where we can find true love, grace, healing, meaning, and purpose for our lives rather than looking for love "in all the wrong places." We need to re-orient ourselves to Jesus, who nurtures our souls and fosters our growing in faith. I am deeply grateful for all musicians, choirs, and soloists who touch our hearts and move our spirits. Thanks to all who provided Children's Messages and who functioned as lecturers. The decorations in the sanctuary are a feast for the eyes.

We continued our "For Our Future" visioning with 33 persons after worship on Sunday, March 19 in our fellowship hall. There is much positive energy and

excitement about our potential to grow in faith, worship God, serve others, and welcome all! We are a vital and vibrant congregation for which I am deeply grateful. Thanks to all who continue to lean into God's vision for us and invest their hearts, minds, and souls in this process. All related info is available on our [website](#).

I continue to visit people who are hospitalized, in nursing facilities, and home bound. We are still seeking a visitation team coordinator who can visit and coordinate the team of 14 volunteers who visit these persons on a monthly basis. We need seven more people who are willing and able to visit with one of our homebound persons one time per month.

I'm meeting regularly with members from the community who show interest in St. Paul's and explore together with them how to network and cooperate to further our mission for the common good. There is a significant population in our area who identify as spiritual but not religious. I wonder how we can reach them.

On behalf of St. Paul's I extend our gratitude to Bill Hockenbrock for his service as treasurer and as chair of our Stewardship and Finance team. Bill stepped

back due to health concerns in the family. Linda Turner does a phenomenal job as treasurer. Marv Rudnitsky is the new chair of the Stewardship and Finance team.

I continue to participate in the Selinsgrove Ministerium, serve on our UCC Central Association (CA) Executive Board, participate in the visioning process for our association and on the planning team for the CA's Annual Meeting which will take place here at St. Paul's on Saturday, April 29, 9:00 a.m.-12 noon.

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!

March 1-31, 2023

Days worked	23
Days off	07
Continuing Education	01
Vacation days	00
Sick Days	00
Holidays	00
Total Days	31

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer



SUMMER WORSHIP TIME 10 A.M.

Summer Worship Time 10 a.m. - Beginning with Memorial Day weekend until Labor Day weekend we will return to our 10 a.m. summer worship time. This allows for more time for Sunday after church activities for people of all ages.

FROM THE STEWARD- SHIP AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

We are so grateful for Bill Hockenbrock's leadership of the committee until he just couldn't do it with Branda's and his own health concerns. A behind the scene kind of guy, as a trained accounting professional, he kept our records straight with plain old pencil and paper methods. And he trained our treasurers as they came on board. Thank you, Bill. Now, we need to add to our committee. We meet regularly just once a month, and the meetings last about one hour. Are you willing to serve?



MUSIC COMMITTEE NEWS



As we head toward Music Appreciation Sunday in May, I reflect on the year so far. It's been wonderful to have Marie Dignam directing our Joyful Noise Choir. She has a nice touch with the kids. They'll miss her, and so will we as she heads to Maine for a full time music education position. A fine bassoonist, we heard her perform at the SU Scholarship event recently. I'm very grateful that she brought our Bell Choir back to life. She leaves two vacancies for us to fill. Your ideas are welcome.

Due to health concerns, Carolyn Patton has not been able to play the piano. We hope she will recover. But we are also looking for help with

substitute pianists.

We are very grateful to Joanne Lauer for being our church's Music Coordinator. She has done a phenomenal job. Also, Joanne will be on the hunt for Special Music for the summer months. She needs our help as in the summer the choirs have a much deserved break. Can help?

Please contact the church office with names of candidates, suggestions, and ideas.

Thank you!

Marv Rudnitsky, Music Committee Chair

Sign up for our Messy Church on May 14 at 4 p.m.!

Our theme in May will be the Holy Spirit as our helper from God. Come and experience the fun (and mess) at Messy Church. Sign up [here!](#) We can't wait to share all that we have prepared with you. Messy Church will take a break for June and July, but we will be back with Messy Church in the Park (East Snyder Park) on August 13 (rain date August 20) and then at our Block Party in September. Thank you to all who make Messy Church happen, to our many tireless and fearless volunteers who are always up for a messy adventure, and thank you to all who come and participate in the fun.

Sigrid Plajer, Messy Church Coordinator





St. Paul's United Church of Christ

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office@saintpauls-ucc.org

saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM

Summer Worship at 10 AM

(May 28 to September 3)

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

"God is Still Speaking"

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

