



THE MESSENGER

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



3 ALL SAINTS SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 5, 2023

We remember our loved ones who passed away during the past year



3 NEW MEMBER
ORIENTATION

November 5 at 11:45 a.m. in the Meeting Room



November
MESSY CHURCH

TIME
4 PM

DATE
NOVEMBER 12

SIGN UP NOW



Embrace the Vision Join Us in Giving

Remember a loving and giving person from your life, a person you admire, because they lived generously. What specific actions demonstrated their loving and giving?

To me, my mother modeled living generously. When I help with our Loaves and Fishes food outreach ministry, I remember my mom and how generously she loved people in need. Loaves and Fishes is a lifesaver for many in our community.

I'm exhilarated when I hear the Joyful Noise Children sing. I'm delighted when I see a grandma crafting together with her grandchildren at Messy Church. I'm moved by those who visit our homebound members and those in nursing homes. I'm touched by those who pray, care for, and write cards to people who are grieving and recovering from surgery. We instill Christian values in our children through Sunday school. Our musicians are awesome. Our worship services instill faith, hope, and love in our hearts. Our First Nations Version Bible study is thought provoking. It helps me grow in faith. These and more of our ministries are changing lives day by day.

In addition to our current programming, we want to establish a Small Group

Ministry, an evening "service" with food and fellowship at the Kind Café a couple of evenings per year, offer faith formation opportunities for couples, young families, and explore a newer style worship for a younger generation.

To make this possible, I ask you to join Sigrid and me in increasing your giving to God's work through St. Paul's for 2024. Your giving changes lives. Your giving provides hope. Your giving feeds the hungry. Through your giving we visit the homebound, comfort the grieving, and boldly proclaim God's love for all.

How much should I give? What does the Bible say about giving? Generous giving is always proportionate giving, a specific percentage of your income/resources (the Bible talks about tithing, giving 10% of your income to God). A modern tithe can be 5%, 6%, 10%, 15%, or any amount in between. Generous giving is giving the first of your income (not from the leftovers). Generous giving is regular giving – consistent, week by week, month by month.

Sigrid and I give 10% of all of our income to St. Paul's. That is as much as our mortgage and car payment combined. It feels great to give generously. It's re-

warding to see St. Paul's thrive and have our personal part in it.

Please listen to the witnessing stewards, Jared Roush, Chanin Wendling, and Ben and Kelsey Williard, sharing in worship during the coming weeks about why they give. Pray about your giving, open your heart to God's guidance, challenge yourself, and make an extravagantly generous giving commitment to St. Paul's for 2024. If you are a member and close friend of St. Paul's, you will receive more information on how to do this in the mail leading up to our Stewardship Sunday, Nov. 12.

Thank you for everything you already do for God's work through St. Paul's!

In faith, hope, and love,

Pastor Dietmar





MESSY CHURCH NOVEMBER 12 AT 4 P.M.

“What Is God Like?” is the question that we will talk about at our next Messy Church on November 12 at 4 p.m. Please sign up [here](#). We will read the book with the same title by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner. At Messy Church we are going to make decorations for our very own St. Paul’s Messy Church Tree for the Library Tree Fest. Please come and help us make the many ornaments we need to decorate the tree and make it the most beautiful tree in the borough. We have lots of fun activities for all, so come and immerse yourself in the question “What is God like?”

“ ...think about what makes you feel safe, what makes you feel brave, and what makes you feel loved. That’s what God is like.



ASSOCIATE PASTOR UPDATE OCTOBER 29, 10:30 A.M.

The search committee for the Associate Pastor has begun to meet. Our first task is to produce the Local Church Profile which will be shared with potential candidates interested in the position. We look forward to getting your input at the service on Sunday, October 29, to help us identify the most important characteristics of St. Paul’s to include as we develop our profile. We will also be asking you to give us your feedback on what characteristics and qualities you think are most important for us to identify in the candidates we review for the position. Thank you for your assistance with the profile and helping us find the right person to join our community as the new Associate Pastor.



ALL SAINTS SUNDAY NOVEMBER 5, 10:30 A.M.

Join us for an extra special service during which we will remember our personal saints, those people who touched us with their love, care, and kindness, and those from our midst who passed away during the last year. This is one of the most meaningful and moving services of the year. Invite a friend to join us for worship on All Saints Sunday!



NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION NOVEMBER 5, 11:45 A.M.

Are you interested in joining St. Paul’s? There is already a small group of people who are ready to join, and Pastor Dietmar is offering a New Member Orientation beginning Sunday, November 5, after our worship service. The group will learn more about who we are at St. Paul’s, what we want to accomplish together, and what meaningful membership can look like. We will clarify expectations and answer questions. There will be refreshments. Please indicate your interest in participating in the New Member Orientation to Pastor Dietmar at dietmar@saintpauls-ucc.org or (570) 541-0121 or to the church office at office@saintpauls-ucc.org.

NOVEMBER



BIRTHDAYS

- 11/01 Harry Derr
Kathy Straub
- 11/02 Scott Kershner
- 11/03 Richard Campbell
Owen Smith
- 11/05 Kelsey Williard
- 11/06 Carey Napp
- 11/07 Myia Brosius
- 11/09 Marty Blessing
Bill Burd
Brenda Hockenbrock
- 11/10 Melissa McCabe
Linda Thomas
Anna Mary Wetzel
- 11/15 Pat Bruno
- 11/16 Benjamin Hanes
- 11/17 Samantha Bernstein
Freya Probst
- 11/19 Ethan Kelly
Michael T. Zettlemoyer
- 11/21 Ray Benner
Jackson Lybarger
- 11/23 Mike Dressler
- 11/25 Linsley Gentile
Owen Spriggle
Kyle Witmer
Maureen Lewis
- 11/26 Stephen Groner
Charles Siegel
Angela Smith
- 11/29 Ann Aurand
- 11/30 Sharon McCuen



ANNIVERSARIES

- 11/05 John & Rebecca Sporar
- 11/06 James & Suzanne Radel
- 11/08 Kim & Bruce Burkhart
Wendy & Bill Mull
- 11/20 Dennis & Darlene Attig
- 11/23 Fred & Donnell Kelly
- 11/24 Denise & Roger Haddon
- 11/29 Malcolm Derk & Erin Goedegebuure

PRAYER LIST

Robin Colyer	All who keep working in critical situations, especially the health care workers
Kathy DeMar	
Don Groner	All who are grieving
Cathy Hafer	Those in leadership positions
Hilda Hahn	Our country - for peace, respect, understanding
Helen Hannah	Those who are dear and close to our hearts and those not named above
The Family of Yvonne Henkle	The people of Ukraine and all those suffering from the raging war
Christine Jaegers	The people of Israel and Gaza
Linda Lehman	We pray for peace
Steve & Helen Mull	
Wilbur and Cheryl Reddinger	
Donna Smith	
Kim Snodgrass	
Allen Wetzel	

THANK YOU NOTE

A big thanks for the heart-warming cards and kind messages sent my way during my foot surgery recovery. It truly lifted my spirits and made every day a little brighter. Your thoughtfulness is much appreciated!

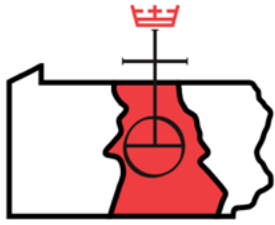
Best,
Sigrid Plajer



St. Paul's Monthly/YTD Budget September 2023

	Actual	Budget
September Income:	\$30,431.02	\$29,226.51
Year to Date Income:	\$258,747.77	\$263,038.56
September Expenses:	\$20,844.70	\$29,226.51
Year to Date Expenses:	\$246,837.12	\$263,038.56

Annual Budget Amount: \$350,718.08
 Income Less Expenses:
 September: \$9,586.32
 Year to Date: \$11,910.65



PENN CENTRAL CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

In January of 2022 the four Pennsylvania Conference Ministers met to discuss the challenges facing their churches. Out of this meeting arose "The Keystone Study Group" made up of representatives from all four conferences. The group identified fifteen functions of a conference:

- faith formation
- mission
- generosity and stewardship ministries
- oversight/authorization and support
- search and call
- digital ministry/technology
- communication
- congregational futures
- disaster ministries
- leadership: training pastors/lay leaders
- ecumenism
- spiritual revival
- UCC identity
- administrative, legal and fiscal oversight
- pastoral care

Dwindling church membership and the decrease in financial resources led the group to conclude that these functions can best be carried out by uniting the conferences.

On October 15 I attended the town hall meeting for Central Association held at St. John's UCC in Lewisburg. The meeting was led by Carrie Call, our conference minister. The why for this merger is for the sharing of resources. "If we are together, we will be stronger." The timeline for this process is to host town hall meetings or association meetings through the 2023-2024 fall and winter. June 6-9, 2024 the four conferences will meet together in State College. There will be speakers, workshops and time for individual conferences to meet. In November 2024 each conference will vote on the Keystone Conference Resolution which, if passed, will be sent on to the 2025 General Synod. All conferences and General Synod must agree to the merger. If the merger is approved, the next step is to create groups to address the legal, financial, governance, process and staffing issues. Association boundaries will remain the same since only Associations can change them.

You will be kept informed as the process continues. Feel free to address any questions or concerns to keystone.conference.project@gmail.com.

Marty Blessing



POINSETTIA ORDERS

Orders are being taken for red poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary during the Christmas holiday. Honor or remember a loved one by purchasing a poinsettia in their name. You can also designate money to go to Bethany's Children's Home or to an American Indian Congregation. Order by Tuesday, November 21 either [online](#) or by filling out the paper order form.



NEW WATER FOUNTAIN

We kindly request your assistance in financing the replacement of our broken water fountain, which will cost approximately \$2,500. The new fountain will include a water bottle filling station. You can easily donate [online](#), or through check/cash. Please write "water fountain" on the memo line if you donate by check. Your support is much appreciated!



NEW ST. PAUL'S TUMBLERS

St. Paul's tumblers are made of double-wall acrylic material and good for hot and cold drinks. You can get your very own St. Paul's tumbler in your favorite color for a suggested donation of \$12. Use the [online form](#) or talk to Linda during office hours or Sigrid on Sunday.



UPPER ROOM NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

You can pick up the Upper Room Devotional at the church on Sunday and 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 OCTOBER 10, 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, Mary Dahlmann, Shane Sanders, Sara Adams, Fritz Heinemann, John Fischer, Kim Burkhart.

Excused: Josh Wenrich, Michael Zettlemoyer, Amy Caron, Malcolm Derk.

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

Pastor's Report: Pastor Dietmar sent his report out in advance of the meeting. He reported that, nationwide, on average, 3 UCC churches close each week and he is committed to working hard to keep that from happening here.

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

Strategic Planning: Pastor Dietmar gave a brief update on items from our Strategic Plan. He stressed the importance of all members inviting new people to our service.

Associate Pastor: The Search Committee has been formed with Peggy Peeler as Chair. At Randy Tanner's request, and by email vote, Jack Lewis was approved to replace Randy on the committee. Members of the Search Committee will officially be installed at the October 29th worship service at which time the congregation will be asked for input on the search.

Property & Grounds: Allen Wetzel reported Property & Grounds is recommending replacement, by Shaffer's Plumbing & Heating, of the drinking fountain in the upstairs hallway. Linda Turner reported Stewardship & Finance is requesting

approval of up to \$2,500 for the replacement and Council approved the expenditure.

Emergency Plan: Linda Turner reported that two new first aid kits have been purchased and received - one for the coat closet on the upper level and one for the kitchen. Crash bars at the main entry are still recommended and Property & Grounds has been asked to research.

Children and Youth Ministries: Mary Dahlmann reported that the search for a Youth Leader continues. She has Sunday School covered through December with volunteers. The Nursery is staffed by two paid attendants and she has volunteers as back-up but will need additional volunteers.

Stewardship Program: The tentative theme is "Embracing Our Vision" and Stewardship Sunday is November 12th. Stewardship & Finance is working on the program.

Pastor Appreciation Month: John Fischer reported that October is Pastor Appreciation Month and Council designated October 29th as Pastor Appreciation Sunday to coincide with our next Meet & Eat.

Holiday Baskets: Allen Wetzel reported that Rachel Rice has volunteered to procure toys for the Christmas baskets.

Congregational By-Laws: Our By-Laws currently state that members of the Personnel Committee need to be Council members. The rotation on and off the committee does not provide continuity for the tasks required. The section (C8) of the By-Laws pertaining to the Personnel Committee will be reviewed by Personnel who will make a recommendation to Council in November. Once Council approves the change, it will be put up for vote to the congregation at the annual meeting in December.

UCC Keystone Conference: UCC Penn Central Conference is exploring merging with the three other UCC conferences in PA. Pastor Dietmar requested that at least one person sit in on a



Town Hall meeting on November 1st at 6:30pm, a UCC Central Association meeting on November 4th at 9am or the UCC Penn Central Conference meeting on November 11th at 9:30am. All meetings are via Zoom. Volunteers can be Council members or from the congregation at large. Sigrid Plajer will add this to the weekly e-News.

2024 Budget: Linda Turner is working on the budget which will go to Stewardship & Finance in November for recommendation to Council at our next meeting.

Christmas Eve/Christmas: Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year. The Worship Committee recommended, and Council approved, we forgo the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday and focus on the 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. Christmas Eve services.

Communion November 5: Class of '24 will serve – Kim Burkhart, Randy Tanner, Josh Wenrich, and Allen Wetzal. Mary Dahlmann will fill in for Josh Wenrich. Since this is All Saints Sunday, a fifth

server is needed and Shane Sanders volunteered.

Support of Israel: Fritz Heinemann made a motion that we, as a congregation, come out in total support of Israel and that we condemn the actions of Hamas for humanitarian reasons, not political. He also suggested that we show our support by flying an Israeli flag. Council approved an email to members stating we support Israel; however, flying the flag requires further investigation and is not feasible at this time. Instead, Sigrid Plajer will make several yard signs to place out front.

Next Council Meeting: November 14, 2023, 7 p.m.

Devotions for November 14th Meeting: Kim Burkhart

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Turner
Council Secretary

Are You Interested in Serving on Church Council?

We are looking for dedicated and committed persons who have been members of St. Paul's for at least 6 months, who have the best interest of St. Paul's at heart to serve for a three year term beginning with January 2024. People serving on Church Council should support our Church's Mission to "grow in faith, worship God, serve others, and welcome all." Council members should be future oriented and support the vision and the strategic plan of the congregation (you can review that on our website). Council meets every second Tuesday

of the month at 7 p.m. for about 1-1/2 hours. Church Council is the governing body of the congregation and cooperates closely with the various committees, ministry teams, and Pastor Dietmar. Church Council makes decisions that affect the whole congregation and approves spending. Please let the church office know by Tuesday, November 14, if you're interested in serving on Church Council. Thank you for considering to participate in our church leadership!

Bacon Burger Benefit for Leaves & Fishes

Selinsgrove VFW ✦ November 16, 5-7 p.m.

\$7 Bacon Burger

Served with
choice of beverage



Choice of toppings
& side dish



940 US-522, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Good Food for a Good Cause

PASTOR'S REPORT SEPTEMBER 2023

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

We kicked off our program year with a new worship series "Welcome to the Table" on Sept. 10. Sunday by Sunday, the Worship Team decorated the sanctuary to perfection to reflect the individual themes. I'm grateful to all who function as Children's Message presenters and as lectors. The Senior Choir with Amy Caron as director, and the Joyful Noise Choir with their new director, Julia Dudek (a Susquehanna University student), started their rehearsals and offer wonderful music in worship. Jaime Namminga and Carolyn Patton inspire us with their special gift of music as pianists in worship. Our worship services are meaningful, moving, and memorable.

I am deeply grateful for all who serve on the Christian Education Team and especially those who teach Children's Sunday school and serve in the nursery as backup persons. It is challenging without a paid Youth Leader to provide programs for children and youth. I'm very thankful for Mary Dahlmann who as Personnel Committee Chair guides us in the process of searching and offering nursery care.

Nationwide, every week three UCC churches close their doors nationwide. I am working very hard that this will never happen to St. Paul's. I need your help! Random people don't just wake up one morning and decide to go to church. It takes great people of faith like you, to spread the word and invite friends, acquaintances, neighbors, colleagues, peers, to give us a chance. Invite them to Meet and Eat, Messy Church, Sunday worship, Bible Study, Prayer Shawl Group, Choir Rehearsals, Loaves and Fishes - any of our gatherings. Whom will you invite to worship with us? Research shows that 75% of all first-time guests come to a service because some-

one they know invited them.

The Fall Bible Study on the First Nations Version (a new translation from an indigenous, native American perspective) of the New Testament is led by Shane Sanders on Sunday mornings at 9:15 am. I'm deeply grateful to Shane for leading this study and for guiding us in exploring some of our most beloved Bible stories from a new perspective. We have participants from Delaware and New York City joining the study via Zoom. It is wonderfully enriching and rewarding!

The Block Party with Messy Church took place on Sunday, Sept. 17, 4-6 pm in our fellowship hall. It was postponed due to rain and held inside due to rain. We missed people from the community, but had a wonderful time with many crafts, activities, and an amazing raffle which generated \$748 which will benefit the Welcome Backpack Program. A great and heartfelt thank you goes to all who made the Block Party possible through organizing, planning, providing raffle items, crafts - what a terrific team!

Thank you to all who contributed so generously to the Welcome Backpack program and those who went to Sunbury on Sept. 16 to assemble the backpacks. These backpacks are much needed and provide essentials for children and families who migrated and arrived in the US for various reasons. I'm touched by your kindness and generosity to help the least of these whom Jesus calls us to care for.

The search committee for an associate pastor was established in September. On Kickoff Sunday, Sept. 10, every person in worship had the opportunity to nominate those persons they trust to find the best associate pastor for St. Paul's. At its Sept. 12 meeting, Church Council decided to ask candidates to serve on the search committee based on the number of nominations they received from the congregation and ensuring that individual families are not repre-

sented multiple times on the committee. Council voted unanimously, and the following persons accepted to serve on the Search Committee: Peggy Peeler (Chairperson), Marty Blessing, Jack Lewis, Jared Roush, Raven Rudnitsky, Shane Sanders, and Chanin Wendling. In a next step, on October 29 in worship, the search committee will ask for the congregation's input on "What candidates should know about St. Paul's (who we are)" and "What qualities do we want to see in a candidate." After that, the search committee will create a profile of St. Paul's. Our UCC Penn Central Conference will assist in the overall process toward hiring an associate pastor.

I participated in the celebration of life for Jack Riegel on September 17 (Jack had passed away on June 27) and officiated the memorial service for Kay Deans on Sept. 29 (Kay was the daughter of Alvah Deans and Emily Mertz). I continue to visit with homebound persons and those residing in nursing and rehab facilities together with Pastor Mary Peterhaensel who provides Home Communion.

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!

September 1-30, 2023

Days worked	21
Days off	07
Continuing Education	01
Vacation days	00
Sick Days	00
Holidays	01
Total Days	30

Respectfully submitted,
Pastor Dietmar Plajer

WHY DO I GIVE TO ST. PAUL'S?

As part of our "Embrace the Vision" stewardship program, Jared Roush shared in worship on October 22 on why he gives to St. Paul's. He invites us all to join him in making a generous giving commitment to God's work through St. Paul's. You will receive more information in the mail on how you can join him and us all.

*For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead.*

We hear the word "Stewardship" used in many ways. But did you know the definition of the word "Stewardship" is "the conducting, supervising or managing of something...especially careful and responsible management of something that's entrusted to one's care."

I personally realize that I would not have anything if Jesus hadn't given it to me. Everything that I have is a gift from Jesus, and I'm thankful every day for what Jesus has given to me. I feel that my giving commitment to St. Paul's is my own personal way of giving back to Jesus and thanking him for what he is giving and entrusting to me.

Why do I give to St. Paul's?

The last several weeks, we have joined together and sung a hymn titled "For Everyone Born". This hymn is a powerful message of Christ's welcoming love for each one of us. The first verse of the hymn reads:



To break that down a little bit: My giving commitment helps St. Paul's be a place at the table for someone, through our Meet & Eat meals and the Messy Church ministry.

My giving commitment helps St. Paul's provide clean water and bread through its Loaves & Fishes ministry. My giving commitment helps St. Paul's be a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing through our Sunday worship services.

I'm excited for St. Paul's continuing to spread Jesus' Word and love to all in the coming year of 2024. When considering your personal giving commitment, please remember, 2 Corinthians 9: 6-8 says that each one of us should give what we have decided in our hearts to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. There are many ways to say and many synonyms for the word "cheerful." So I ask that you please join me in renewing your personal giving commitment and be among the group here at St. Paul's of cheerful, enthusiastic, happy, jaunty, jolly, joyful, sunny and upbeat givers.



**HANGING OF THE GREENS
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 26
AFTER WORSHIP**

Please help us decorate our sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. We need your help to hang garlands, stars, bows, decorate the Christmas Trees, communion table, the Advent Wreath and set up the nativities in the windows. Thank you for your help!



**CAROLING
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17
AT 4 P.M.**

Mark your calendar and join us as we share the joy of Christmas with members and friends of St. Paul's who are homebound and living in nursing homes. We will sing Christmas Carols with them. We meet in St. Paul's parking lot on Dec. 17 at 4 pm.



**CHRISTMAS EVE
DECEMBER 24
AT 4 P.M. AND 7 P.M.**

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, and Church Council decided to NOT offer a morning worship service on December 24. All are invited to join us for the two Christmas Eve Candlelight services at 4 pm (family focussed) and at 7 pm (traditional). Invite someone to come with you!



St. Paul's United Church of Christ

400 North Market Street, Selinsgrove, PA 17870

Tel. (570) 374-8749

office@saintpauls-ucc.org

saintpauls-ucc.org

Worship Sunday at 10:30 AM

also on Facebook, YouTube, and our website

"God is Still Speaking"

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

We thank God for...

