January 31, 2022

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

Sending you the peace, light and warmth of Christ on this week following last week's snow and ice.

Worship Team met yesterday to discuss the upcoming Lent and Advent seasons. Ash Wednesday worship is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2 at 7:00 p.m. This service will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Imposition of Ashes. As the time nears, we will share with you information about Holy Week, April 10-17.

Our congregation's Annual Meeting is set for Sunday, February 27 at the end of the worship service. This is the meeting we approve the 2021 annual reports.

Several people have asked for the return of Bible Study. Pastor Becky will begin a six-week study beginning on Thursday, February 10 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. We will meet both by Zoom and in person in the designated Zoom Room (the corner room near the Nursery). The Zoom link to Bible Study is:

https://us02web.zoom.us/i/85966539897?pwd=bGhkSHpaUDRva1 MxWnhDaDZYVWJaQT09

Meeting ID: 859 6653 9897 Passcode: 704709

Pastor Becky will also put this link on the St. Paul Facebook page.

Looking ahead, singer and songwriter Carrie Newcomer will give a concert at St. Paul Church on Saturday, March 5 at 7:00 p.m. Cost of tickets is \$25 and can be purchased at the door or via EventBrite.com. Ms. Newcomer requires that all concert-goers arrive with proof of vaccination and wear masks for the entire performance.

We end with a reminder about Covid19 transmissionsespecially with the Omicron variant taking hold in our area. Incidences of positive cases are going up in our congregation and community. If you have been in contact with someone who either tests positive for Covid19 or have been in contact with someone who soon after you've been with them tests positive, PLEASE, you need to quarantine yourself from St. Paul Church, its building, and its staff.

We thank you for your faithfulness. We thank you for your generosity. We thank you for your love for God and neighbor.

Blessings,

Roland Dicke Council President Council VP

Roland Dector Myra Hannkutt Becky ab S

Myra Hanenkratt Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Senior Pastor

Please remember the families of Mary Ellen White and Scott Kuenning in your prayers.

Mary Ellen passed away Sunday, January 30, 2022. Service to celebrate her life will be held Saturday, February 19, 2022 at 1:00pm.

Scott passed away Monday, January 31, 2022. Service to celebrate his life was held Wednesday, February 2, 2022.

Updated Financial Information for 2021 and 2022 are not available due to staff illness and the recent snow storm.

Blessing Pantry December 2021 & January 2022 Numbers:

	December	January
Families	31	37
Age 60+	10	7
18-59	55	73
0-17	44	55
Total	109	135





Healing Stories

Use this resource at home to guide your household's daily devotions.



Pray: Light a candle and open your devotion time with a prayer.

God of restoration, you have the power to heal and to renew. Mend all that is broken in us and in our world, and bring us to wholeness, for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.



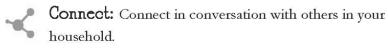
Read: Read the key verses from Sunday's reading.

⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. (John 9:6-7)



Reflect: Reflect on the scripture summary.

Jesus healed many people—not just their bodies, but in all areas of wellness.



What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

Are there people today who are still blamed for their misfortune (poverty, addiction, homelessness, mental illness)? How might we become instruments of understanding and acceptance for them?

For the littles: Who do you know that is differently abled? What adaptations have been made so they can best experience the world?

Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God bless you with sight and insight. Amen.

Do: By acting on what we learn, we make God's word come alive. Do the following activity this week.

Watch the TED Talk by Stella Young, "I'm not your inspiration, thank you very much." Discuss it with those in your bubble.



Go Deeper: Go to clergystuff.com/daily-devotions for devotions on the daily readings.

Sunday, John 4:46-54 [5:1-18], Healing Stories Monday, John 5:1-18, Healing Stories Tuesday, John 5:19-29, The Authority of the Son Wednesday, John 5:30-47, Witnesses to Jesus Thursday, John 6:1-15, Feeding the Five Thousand Friday, John 6:16-21, Jesus Walks on Water Saturday, John 6:22-34, Bread from Heaven



St. Paul United Church of Christ

119 North Franklin Street New Bremen, Ohio 45869 Phone (419-629-2502), Fax (419-629-3207) Email <u>stpaulnb@nktelco.net</u> or <u>stpaulnb@gmail.com</u> Visit our website at <u>https://stpaulnb.org</u> Like and follow our page St. Paul United Church of Christ – New Bremen, Ohio on Facebook Rev. Becky Erb Strang-Senior Pastor Roland Dicke-Council President

Welcome to St. Paul UCC, we are glad you are here!!

Whether you are worshipping online or in person, Welcome, one and all, to this time of worship. We are blessed to have you with us today.

February 13, 2022 Sixth Sunday After Epiphany

Worship Leaders

Ministers Rev. Becky Erb Strang Roland Dicke Connie O'Neill Tracy Oldiges Jim Strang The Congregation Senior Pastor Liturgist Organist Sr. Deacon Chancel Choir/Music Director

PRELUDE

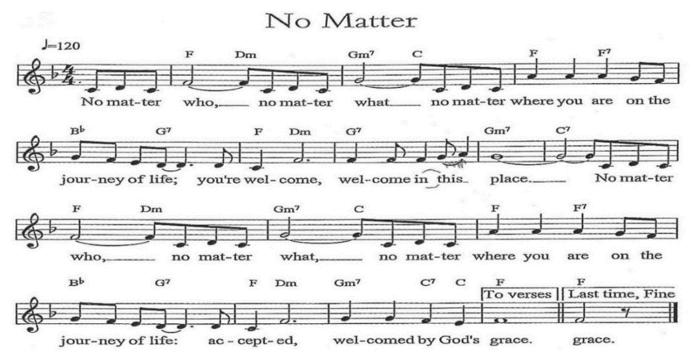
LIGHTING OF CANDLES: You are invited to light a candle or candles at home in preparation for worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLANTING SEEDS: CONFIRMATION Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life. (Proverbs 4:13) The Rite of Confirmation, which takes place at St. Paul Church every Palm Sunday,

is the formal welcome to our eighth grade and older students as they take on as their own the baptismal promises their parents made on their behalf in infancy/childhood. Confirmation class meets every Wednesday from 7:00-8:30 from September through Lent. Together, we dig deeply in the Bible as we learn about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, our Christian faith and Christian service. This year, we have added a four-week series on world religions. Shelly Smart, Lisa Weigandt, Jeff Paul and Pastor Becky team teach this class. If you would like to be part of the team or have a student entering eighth grade in the fall, please contact Pastor Becky

WELCOME SONG



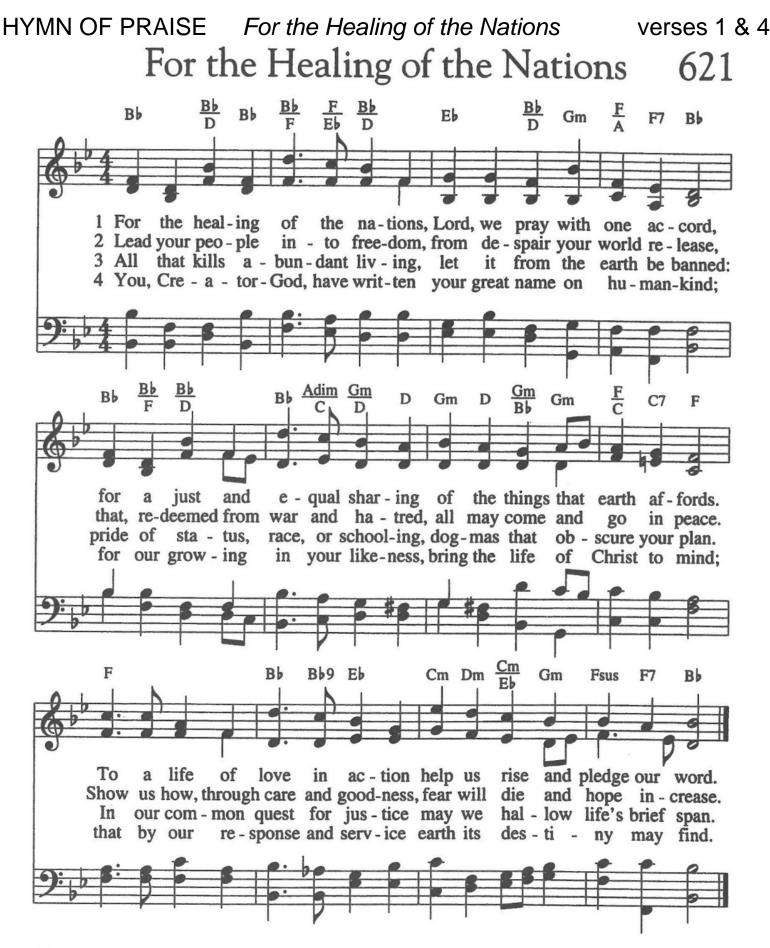
CALL TO WORSHIP

(from <u>The Worship Sourcebook</u>; Faith Alive Christian Resources; 2013) Leader: Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.

People: For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth.

Leader: God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

People: Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises!



WORDS: Fred Kaan (1929-) MUSIC: Henry T. Smart (1813-1879) Words © 1968 Hope Publishing Company

REGENT SQUARE 8.7.8.7.8.7. TIME OF CONFESSION, PARDON, AND ASSURANCE

Leader: Let us confess our sins before God and one another.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader: Let us pray. Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

People: Wash us thoroughly from our brokenness, cleanse us from our sin.

Leader: For we know our transgressions and our sins are ever before us.

People: Against you, you alone O God, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Leader: Holy God, you desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach us wisdom in our secret hearts.

People: Hide your face from our sins and blot out our brokenness.

Leader: Create in us clean hearts, O God, and put a new and right spirit within us.

People: Do not cast us from your presence: forgive us and call us your own. Amen.

Leader: While it is true that we have sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love for us in Jesus Christ. To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say: In Jesus Christ, your sin is forgiven!

People: Thanks be to God!



TIME FOR THE CHILD WITHIN US

Biblical scholars believe that the gospels that we have today: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, were each compiled by and for very specific Christian communities. The sources of each gospel are varied, but there is general agreement that Jesus' parables, healing miracles, and sayings, may have originally come from what we might today call pamphlets that early believers carried from village to village to share the good news of Jesus.

In the Gospel of John, we even have language that supports that: "signs" are numbered throughout the gospel—probably coming from another, more original source.

Today's scripture lesson is the second sign of seven that Jesus performed in the Gospel of John. After each sign, there was a dialogue, and then Jesus explained his sign.

While these signs are listed and labeled in John, the signs of Jesus' healing miracles are all around us, if we are looking. This week, I challenge you to look for the miraculous. Expect the extra-ordinary. Delight in the joy we find in Jesus.

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: God's Love!!!!

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Monica Bushman, Carol Mohrman, Julia Paul, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Jan Dammeyer, Shannon Shupp, and Dee Schroer.

PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Leader: Let us pray. Confident in your abundant grace, we pray for the church, for our community, for the world, and for all those in need.

SILENCE

Leader: God of all, so many came to your son, Jesus, for healing. Many responded with grace and gratitude. Others responded with fear or apathy. Help us to turn our faces toward you with humility and thankfulness for all you have done and continue to do. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Often creation itself groans under the burden of brokenness, some caused by humanity, some by natural disasters. Give us hands to mend the wounds of this planet, and the eyes to see where our actions hurt or where they heal. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Grant our world's leaders wisdom to lead with justice, courage, humility, gratitude, and mercy, ever lifting up the needs of those who cannot speak or act for themselves. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Like the mindful healing of your son, Jesus, pour healing upon all who are in need today, all who suffer from illness, grief, poverty, addiction, despair, isolation, abuse, neglect, or any other form of suffering. Challenge us to offer your healing love in our hurting world. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Let every voice be heard from every station, position, hierarchy, caste, or class. Level the playing field so that no one suffers at the hands of another. Lord, in your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Grateful for your everlasting faithfulness, we lift our hearts and our prayers to you, merciful God, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray...Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEM

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: John 4:46-5:9 (NRSV)
 Then Jesus came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. ⁴⁷ When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see

signs and wonders you will not believe." ⁴⁹ The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." ⁵⁰ Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. ⁵¹ As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. ⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." ⁵³ The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household. ⁵⁴ Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

² Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. ³ In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁵ One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" ⁷ The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." ⁸ Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." ⁹ At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

RESPONSE

When I Behold the Son

When I Behold the Son

Word and Music by J. L. Salt(er)



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Rev. Becky Erb Strang

SERMON

Have you been feeling stuck? Does life these days seem to stretch out without meaning? It is our confession as Christians that two full years into the pandemic we are still struggling to love God and love neighbor. We are grieving loss on so many levels. Life in these days can seem difficult and sometimes without hope or direction.

In the early months of the pandemic it seemed as if our nation came together. Lockdowns were readily kept to keep neighbors and loved ones safe. Here in New Bremen, our entire community worked together to expand the Blessing Pantry in order to feed the many folk who'd lost their jobs. From personal experience, in those early months of Covid19 I felt as if I had been created by God for that very moment—it was a time of creative thinking, high energy, and our community working together with a common enemy: the novel coronavirus.

I don't know about you, but these days I am weary. The pandemic has gone on so much longer than I expected. It is difficult to imagine what life will look like 6 months from now, much less six years from now. Living into hope in Jesus seems much more difficult these days.

Like the unnamed man in the second half of today's scripture lesson, far too often we are too paralyzed to take action. The pandemic has us feeling stuck and we don't know how to move forward. We find ourselves too enmeshed with our own troubles, sorrows, and pain to look beyond our suffering for real healing and transformation.

Perhaps this is what happened to the man in today's reading. He had been ill—we do not know his ailment—for 38 years. There he was on his mat—lying among the others who were also in need of healing. Legend had it that when the waters were stirred—either by an underground spring or by angels (you can choose your own translation), the first person to get into the freshly stirred pool would be made well.

You would think that this man—ailing for some 38 years would want to be healed. In today's lingo, it would be called a "no brainer." Yet, Jesus did not assume this to be so. Instead, he asked, "Do you want to be made well?"

Now, what kind of question is that? "Do you want to be made well?" The answer seems obvious—well, of course the man would want to be healed. Of course he wanted to be made well. But not so fast!

I ask you today: Do you want to be made well? I wonder sometimes if we are like the man at the side of the pool—trapped in the paralysis of our minds, the paralysis of our fear. The healing waters are within reach, the pool has been freshly stirred, but for some reason we seem to be unable to drag ourselves to the waters of new life.

Like our own fears and our own paralysis, the man by the poolside answered Jesus out of his hopelessness: "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone gets there ahead of me."

In the midst of the man's excuses, in the midst <u>of our own</u> excuses, Jesus offers hope. He said: Stand up. Take up your mat and walk. And, much to everyone's surprise, the man did just that!

Can you see that scene? For 38 years this man had stayed on his mat by the poolside, unable, unwilling, unsure of how to dive into the pool of healing. Yet, when commanded by Jesus to get up and walk, the scripture tells us he did not hesitate—he got right up and began to walk.

I can imagine the astonishment of everyone else who had arrived at the pool that day for healing. Before them was a man who, in 38 years, had not made it into the pool when the waters were stirred up. And along comes this prophet Jesus who healed this man with just a word!

We know this to be true: words can be used for harm or for healing.

What was said to you in the past that has caused you great harm?

What have you said to another that has caused harm?

Instinctively we know this—that childhood phrase, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt." For some of us, words have hurt us so badly that we have become paralyzed/stuck/afraid to move ahead.

This time I ask: what words offer you healing and hope?

Some words come to mind: Love. Joy. Peace. Forgiveness. Grace. And even, "I believe in you. You can do this!"

Isn't that, in essence, what Jesus said to the man by the side of the pool? I believe in you. You can do this! (Stand up! Take up your mat and walk!)

Friends, we don't say this to one another often enough, and we rarely believe this about ourselves, but Jesus believes in you. Jesus loves you. You can do this difficult thing.

This week I challenge you to reach out to someone who is struggling. Reach out to someone who is recuperating from illness, injury or surgery. Reach out to someone who is grieving. Reach out to someone for whom fear seems to have the upper hand. Then say to them, "I believe in you. You can do this."

Life with Jesus offers us hope beyond our imaginations. Life in Christ is a life of hope. We are called to answer "Yes" to that hope and to live within the risk of wholeness and healing.

Who in your life needs words of encouragement and healing? Who needs to hear words of love?

What about us? Are you feeling stuck? Discouraged? Lost?

Know this: I believe in you. Jesus believes in you. God loves you always and forever. You can do this difficult thing. You can pick up your mat and dive deeply into the pools of healing.

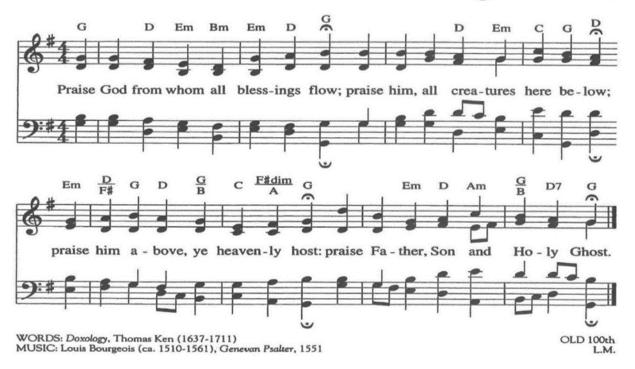
Friends: Let's go! Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Jesus said, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Let us give generously and joyfully.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow 34



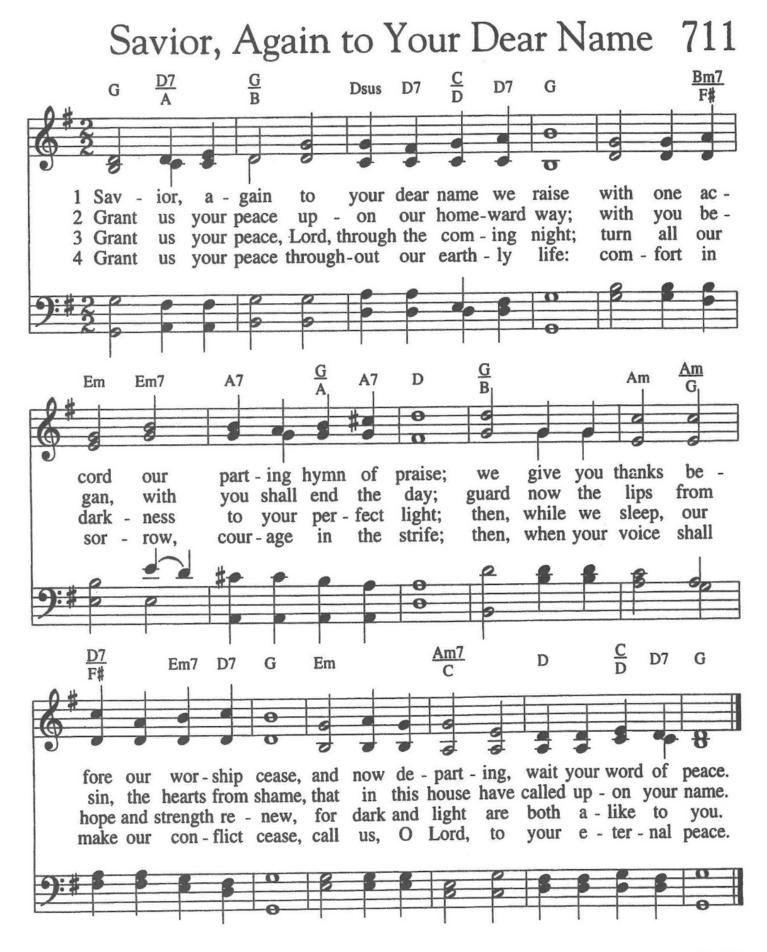
PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

We bring these gifts before you, healing God, with gratitude for the abundant blessings you have bestowed on your people. Use these gifts to bring healing to the world and uplift all to wellness, justice and equity. Amen.

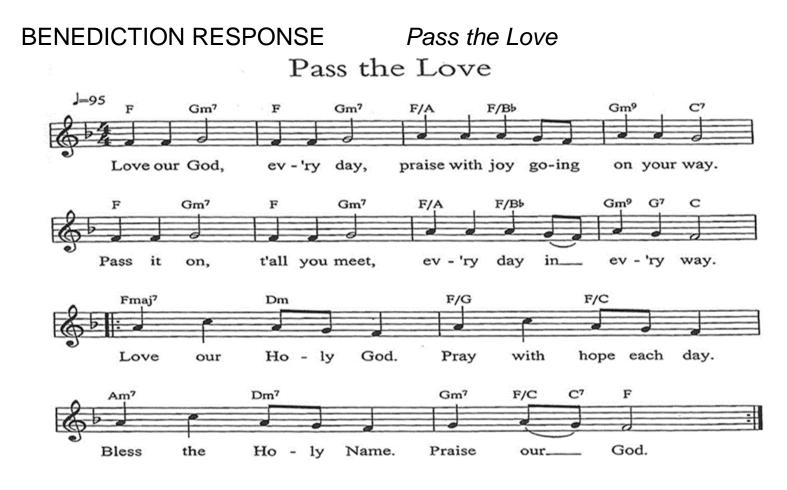
HYMN OF SENDING

Savior, Again to Your Dear Name

verses 1 & 4



WORDS: John Ellerton (1826-1893) MUSIC: Edward J. Hopkins (1818-1901) BENEDICTION: The love of God, the Father, the faithful creator, the peace of Christ, the wounded healer, the joy of the Mother Spirit, the hope of the Three in One, surround you and encourage you today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.



PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are in loving memory of Jane Koenig by Judy, Karen & George Jr. and John & Gin Voress.

Attendance-Daily Devotions-92, January 30-Sunday Worship Online-324, In Person-55, Sunday School-15, Teachers-5.

Sundays in February-Worship will be in person and via Facebook Live at 10:15am. **Sunday School** will be in person at 9:00am.

Daily Devotions-Please join us, Monday-Thursday at 11:30am, online via Facebook Live. These will air on our Facebook page: St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH.

Bible Study: Zoom and In-Person- Thursday's at 6:30 p.m., Pastor Becky will lead a weekly Bible Study via both Zoom and in-person in the Zoom Room (corner classroom next to the nursery). We will study, discuss and pray over scriptures—including the verses for the upcoming Sunday worship. This study is open to people of all ages. The Zoom link: <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85966539897?pwd=bGhkSHpaUDRva1MxW</u> <u>nhDaDZYVWJaQT09</u> **Meeting ID: 859 6653 9897 Passcode: 704709** Any questions? Contact Pastor Becky

Congregational Meeting-will take place Sunday February 27, 2022 during the 10:15am worship service.

Bulletin Availability-weekly bulletins are available for download on our website stpaulnb.org. Just click the yellow BULLETINS box in the upper right hand corner.

Open Table
Free Community MealWhen:
When:
Everyone
Where:
St. Paul Assembly Room
Serving:
4:00pm-6:00pmMenu:Shredded Chicken Sand, Cheesy Potatoes, Salad, Dessert
Carry-outs Available, Free Chair Massages
Prepared and Served by:
New Bremen HS Student Council
Please Note-March meal has been canceled.

An Evening with Carrie Newcomer and Pianist Gary Walters.

March 5, 2022 7:00 p.m. St. Paul United Church of Christ. Carrie Newcomer is a songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. She has been described as a "prairie mystic" by the Boston Globe and as one who "asks all the right questions" by Rolling Stone Magazine. Carrie has 19 nationally released albums, including her most recent Until Now. Over the past two years, we have incorporated several of Carrie's songs in worship—including Room at the Table for a sung communion litury. We invite you to join us for an evening of music and fellowship. Entrance to the venue requires proof of Covid 19 vaccination and wearing of a mask for the entirety of the concert. Tickets are \$25.00 can be purchased at the door or in advance at carrienewcomer.com/tour or by this link https://www.eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-carrie-newcomer-and-pianist-gary-walters-tickets-252131200207

2022 Altar Flower Chart has been posted in the Narthex. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. Dates available-February 20, April 3, 24, May 8, 22, June 26, August 14, 28, October 30, November 20. You may also call the church office Monday-Friday to sign up. Thank you. Price is \$30.00.

March/April Upper Rooms-are available at the East entrance to the education building and on the round tables in the sanctuary. Or please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

Blessing Pantry-is accessible during these hours - Tuesdays 5:30pm-7:30pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays 1:00pm-3:00pm. The Pantry will be closed Mondays and Fridays. All Donations Welcome – Blessing Pantry Needs-Toilet Paper, Diapers (size 1, 2, 4, 5, 6), Baby Wipes, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Shaving Cream, Feminine Hygiene Products (Tampons & Pads), Dish Soap, Bar Soap, Body Wash, Shampoo, Conditioner, Hand Soap, Laundry Detergent, Dryer Sheets, Bandages, Storage Bags, Garbage Bags, Napkins, Paper Plates and Paper Towels. Thank you! There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

Mailbox-There is a mailbox outside of the East Educational Building door for any correspondence you may have for the church and would like to drop off. Please lift the flap and drop through the slot on the top. Thank you!

Calendar-Week of February 13, 2022			
Sunday	9:00am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal	
	9:00am	Sunday School	
	10:15am Worsh	ip in person & via Facebook Live	
Monday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live	
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop-New Bremen	
Tuesday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live	
	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry Open	
Wednesday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live	
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open	
	5:30pm-6:30pm	Splash (4 th & 5 th grade)	
	6:30pm	Youth Dinner	
	7:00pm-8:00pm	Jr/Sr High Youth	
	7:00pm-8:30pm	Confirmation	
Thursday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live	
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open	
	•	le Study-in person & via Zoom	
Friday	Noon	Office Closed	

E-Giving @ St. Paul

Online – Make a donation on our website: stpaulnb.org *Text* – Make a donation to our Number: 833-308-0048

How To Give by Text (Example - *my amount for the example is* \$25 *(minimum amount is* \$5.00))

For general fund giving: Send 25 space gl (hit send)
 For building & property fund giving: Send 25 space bp (hit send)
 For Blossing Baptry: Send 25 space paptry (bit send)

For Blessing Pantry: Send 25 space pantry (hit send)

For project of the year giving: Send 25 space poy (hit send)
Once a text amount is sent:

Registration Link- Sent via text the first time a donation is made. Thank you! Please visit (link) to register.

Donation Confirm- Sent via text each time a donation is made.