

May 2, 2022

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the Risen Christ who is our Savior and Friend!

Yesterday Pastor Becky held a New Member Class. We are delighted to welcome to St. Paul Church Scott Dammeyer, Matthew Albers, and Amy Dicke! The Body of Christ at St. Paul UCC continues to grow and flourish!

Worship Team also met yesterday. We will restart Saturday night worship services beginning in September once a month—on communion weekends. This means that we will have 5:00 p.m. Saturday worship in the Chapel on September 3, October 1, November 5, and December 3. We will give you more information as we get closer to September.

As we've written before, the Discipleship Team is going through a reboot—seeking Champions for the many ministries of St. Paul Church. We are still seeking champions for: Father/Son Banquet, Bremenfest Float, Dayton Dragons Games, September Kick-Off Picnic, Field Trip to Do Good Restaurant, Trunk or Treating, Christmas Caroling, New Year's Eve Dinner, Coffee and Canvas (for adults), Cupcakes and Canvas (for children), Website Upkeep, Landscaping & Weed Pulling, Kitchen Upkeep, Nursery Coordinator, and Cookie Jar Champion. We also need a Champion Team for our Open Table Community Meals. Pastor Becky has worked since January to solicit a volunteer team for this ministry and has run completely dry. Coordinating the meals takes more than one person. We do have a list of tasks that needs to be completed by this Team. **If we don't have a Champion Team for the Community Meal, our meal on May 16 will be our last.** If you are interested in serving as a Champion for any of these ministry areas, please contact Becky.


2022's Project of the Year includes various upkeep and maintenance at St. Church. Last week, Lima Pipe Organ Company let us know that part of the Pedal 32' Contra Fagotto stop is no longer working on our beloved organ. This particular stop is not connected to the pipes, but is part of the electronic tone generators that were added in 1994. The cost to repair this will be no more than \$4,500. Our hope is that we can raise these funds by summertime to have repairs completed before September. You can mark your giving for this project as "Project of the Year."

Another project we are seeking funding for is our upcoming Art Camp Festival. Instead of our traditional summertime Art Camp,

St. Paul Church is hosting an Art Camp Festival on Wednesday, June 8 in the evening. This event draws children, youth and families from New Bremen and area villages and towns. We offer a free meal, bouncy houses, crafts, games, music, New Bremen's canine officer and New Bremen's fire trucks. Last year we easily fed 500 people at the Art Camp Festival. The cost for this year's Festival is just under \$5000. We have raised a portion of the funds, but we invite you to prayerfully consider donating to the Art Camp Festival. This fun-filled evening showcases St. Paul Church's hospitality and outreach to the community. We thank you for considering this opportunity to make a difference in our community.

As a reminder, Pastor Becky is having foot surgery on June 14. If all goes well, she will return to St. Paul on Friday, July 15 and will return to worship on Sunday, July 17. Bryan Trego and our two SALT interns, Elyssa Mullins and Eli Schmitmeyer, will fill in during her absence. **While Becky is on medical leave, she will not respond to phone calls, text messages or Facebook messages.** Our St. Paul folk will need to go through the church office for any pastoral needs. Thank you for your understanding!

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 Myra Hanenkratt Rev. Becky Erb Strang
Council President Council VP Senior Pastor

Financial Information as of May 2, 2022

Operating Fund

Beg. Balance \$0.00
Giving Income \$2,439.00(weekly)
Endowment Trans \$7,600.00(ytd)
Income \$125,951.13(ytd)
Expenses \$113,385.85(ytd)
Balance \$12,565.28(ytd)

Project of the Year

Income \$716.00

Local Aid

Beg. Balance \$12,218.82
Income \$4,134.00(ytd)
Expenses \$10,028.87(ytd)
Balance \$6,323.95(ytd)

Blessing Pantry

Beg. Balance \$29,161.12
Income \$7,027.00(ytd)
Expenses \$5,666.51(ytd)
Balance \$30,521.61(ytd)

Our Church Wider Mission

Pledge \$25,000.00
Income \$154.50(weekly)
Income \$8,362.00(ytd)



Paul and Silas

May 8, 2022

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 authenticity, when Paul and Silas healed a girl with a spirit of divination, they were beaten and thrown in jail for threatening her owner's livelihood. They put the jailer's life before their own when they refused to escape. Help us to show our true selves to the world as Paul and Silas did. Amen.



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

²⁹The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:29-31)



Reflect: Reflect on the scripture summary.

When Paul and Silas healed a girl with a spirit of divination, the girl's owners had them beaten and thrown in jail. Their act of healing was going to cost them a lot of money.



Connect: Connect in conversation with others in your household.

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

Tell of a time something you did had unexpected consequences. What would you do if you were locked up for doing something good and right?

For the littles: Do you always do the right thing? It's ok. Nobody does.



Bless: Close your devotion with a blessing.

May God work through you in unexpected ways. Amen.



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

Connect with a prison chaplain. Visit the prison with them the next time they go.



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

Sunday, Acts 16:16-34, Paul and Silas

Monday, Acts 16:35-40, Paul and Silas

Tuesday, Acts 15:1-11, The Council at Jerusalem

Wednesday, Acts 15:12-21, The Council at Jerusalem

Thursday, Acts 16:1-5, Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

Friday, Acts 16:6-10, Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

Saturday, Acts 16:11-15, The Conversion of Lydia



St. Paul United Church of Christ

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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, blessing and greetings to one and all. In the name of Christ, you are welcome today and every day.

May 8, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Worship Leaders

Ministers

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Rev. David Long-Higgins

John Gilberg

Connie O'Neill

Tracy Oldiges

Jim Strang

The Congregation

Senior Pastor

Heartland Conference Minister

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

TAKING ROOT: CHURCH COUNCIL *The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. (Acts 15:6)* The Church Council of St. Paul Church meets on the second Tuesday of each month. Members of Council include the Council President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Trustees, Elders, Deacons and members of church staff. Council makes decisions on behalf of the congregation in between congregational meetings. Council is also the place where the many ministries and missions of St. Paul Church “check in” to report their happenings.

WELCOME SONG

No Matter

J=120

No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what no mat-ter where you are on the

jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter

who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the

jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-comed by God's grace. grace.

To verses | Last time, Fine

CALL TO WORSHIP

(Adapted from Psalm 30 The Message by Eugene Peterson)

Leader: God is with us through thick and thin.

People: We yell to God for help and God puts us back together.

Leader: God has pulled us from the grave and given us another chance at life.

People: The Holy One has changed our laments into a whirling dance. We rip off our mourning bands and are decked with wildflowers.

Leader: We cannot help but burst into song!

People: God, our God, we cannot thank you enough!

When in Our Music God Is Glorified 7

Unison

G D(no3) D D7 G C Bm

1 When in our mu - sic God is glo - ri - fied,
 2 How of - ten, mak - ing mu - sic, we have found
 3 So has the Church, in lit - ur - gy and song,
 4 And did not Je - sus sing a psalm that night
 5 Let ev - ery in - stru - ment be tuned for praise!

G D F# Em7 D7 F# G D7 A G A9 G D F# A7 Dsus D

and ad - o - ra - tion leaves no room for pride,
 a new di - men - sion in the world of sound,
 in faith and love, through cen - tu - ries of wrong,
 when ut - most e - vil strove a - gainst the light?
 Let all re - joice who have a voice to raise!

Dm D7 G7 C2 Am D9 A Em Am6 E Em

it is as though the whole cre - a - tion cried:
 as wor - ship moved us to a more pro - found
 borne wit - ness to the truth in ev - ery tongue:
 Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
 And may God give us faith to sing al - ways:

1-4 Cmaj7 Am C Am D7 A G C E D7sus D | 5 Cmaj7 C C6 G C6 G C

1-4 Al - le - lu - ia! 5 Al - le - lu - ia!

SERVICE OF CONFESSION

Leader: With all the signs of new life in Christ around us, we still cling to our old ways. Let us confess our sin to God and to one another.

People: When we do not accept as our sisters and brothers in Christ those who are different from us, forgive us, O God. When we oppose you by opposing those who disrupt our routines and challenge our assumptions, forgive us, O God. God, in your mercy, restore us to newness of life. Bind together your church universal through the coming of your Holy Spirit. Empower us to witness with courage to the presence of Jesus Christ among us. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

Leader: Take heart: God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life. Our sins are forgiven. Let us forgive one another and give ourselves to one another in the joyful community of the risen Christ. Amen.

HALLELUJAH!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht Hal - le -

lu - jaht Hal - le - lu - jaht

TIME FOR THE CHILD WITHIN US: MOTHER'S DAY

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Celebration of mothers and all who have acted as mothers to us.

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Donald Mohrman, 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. Holy and Life-Giving God, we lift up to you today the world, our nation, our state, our community and our congregation.

SILENT PRAYER

Leader: We risk little and suffer even less to serve you, Lord Jesus, compared with what your first followers endured. Remind us of their sacrifice, dedication, and determination that the Gospel would be spread, and make us grateful that we are beneficiaries of their witness. Risen Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: The spirits obey you and all powers submit to you, O God. Teach us to use our gifts for good and not for dishonest gain. Lead us to focus on our efforts on behalf of those in need instead of exploiting others for our own benefit. May honesty, integrity, and love prevail over greed and manipulation. Risen Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: On this day when we celebrate our earthly mothers and all those who show a mother's love and care, remind us of those who have lost or have never known their mothers, those who are in conflict or estranged from them, and those who would desire children, but struggle to, or cannot have them. Make us all family to one another, looking not to our own interests, but to the interests of others. Risen Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Your resurrection gives hope to all who despair of ever feeling whole again. Strengthen all who are in recovery, rehabilitation, or chronic treatment, and show them what hope looks like in the face of Jesus. Pour the abundance of your healing and hope upon all who are sick, all who are recuperating, all who are grieving loss. Risen Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Sometimes we feel unworthy to stand in the company of such great sufferers for the faith. Remind us that they, like us, were imperfect, yet empowered by your Spirit. Gladden our hearts with the power we have through you. Risen Lord,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Gather these and all prayers of this community together into your loving arms, through the mercy of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray

together...**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: Acts 16:16-34 (NRSV)

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." ¹⁸ She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. ²⁰ When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews ²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." ²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." ²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he

brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay.³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

SUNG RESPONSE

Here I Am!

Here I Am!

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

Piano/Organ

♩ = 160

The musical score is written for Piano/Organ in 4/4 time with a tempo of 160. It consists of five systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano/organ accompaniment line. The chords are indicated above the vocal line.

System 1: Chords: Am, F, Dm, G. Lyrics: Here I am! With - in these pris - on walls,

System 2: Chords: Em, Am, F, G. Lyrics: I still heed your call, pro - claim - ing you to all!

System 3: Chords: Am, F, Dm, G. Lyrics: Help me, Lord, to touch this jail - er's heart.

System 4: Chords: F, C/E. Lyrics: Let me do my part help - ing him to start

System 5: Chords: Dm, G, C. Lyrics: listen - ing to your spir - it's call.

SERMON

Rev. David Long-Higgins

I want to begin this morning by saying again what a delight it is to be with you friends again, especially as this is the church of my great, great, grandparents. I want to say a special word of thanks to Pastor Becky for the kind invitation so that I could be with you in this fourth Sunday of Easter. So, we continue to say Christ is Risen, Christ is Risen indeed. More on that motion of God's love as set forth in our reading from Acts in just a minute.

But first I want to say a word about that motion of God's resurrecting power at work in our life together. First it is my great honor and privilege to bring you greetings from your relatives...that is the 322 other congregations which make up the Heartland Conference (formerly known as the Ohio Conference) of the United Church of Christ, which you may know includes two congregations in West Virginia and eight in Northern Kentucky just across the river from Cincinnati.

So, I would like to catch you up with what is going on with the fam these days. In COVID time, leaders from throughout the Conference have discerned that God has set before all of us as a vision of renewed collaboration where together in Christ's love, we work to reconcile and restore all of God's creation.

Now that sounds large – and the truth is, it is large. But, of course, you know it is not by our own strength alone that we engage this work. We trust that there is an alive Holy Spirit that empowers us to connect, equip and support our faith communities to grow as faithful disciples and responsible stewards, following Jesus' call to extravagantly love all God's children and creation.

I think of this as a garden that God is planting using each of us and the communities of faith to which we belong as a testimony to God's deep desire for beauty and joy to rise. I know that you know what I am talking about. I have scoped you out on your website. I have read about the Busy 12 (which is whole lot more than 12), your commitment to feeding the hungry and the work of your mission team, your connections to El Salvador through the Northwest Ohio Association, and so much more. Your commitment to servanthood that is at the core of the Christ life inspires me. What a blessing you are!

Because of your shared commitment, ministry initiatives across our life in the Heartland Conference are being strengthened and new ministry networks are being developed to inspire, connect, equip and support individuals and congregations in their vocational discernment, clarity and engagement.

Because God yearns for full flourishing of every human being, an anti-racism network has been gathering across our life to build new understandings and commitment. Because we are most alive in self-giving love, we have been building a network to cultivate the practice and calling of Christ to a generous life.

You may have noticed especially now the need for mental health ministry and increasingly accessible spaces, so a conference inclusion network has been formed. You may know that there is a quiet crisis among veterans: 22 of whom complete suicide on a daily basis. A first conversation about a veterans' network is going to happen this coming Wednesday via zoom at 7 p.m.

Because faith formation doesn't happen by accident, we have a network for sharing ideas and to offer encouragement. Also significant is our outdoor ministry at Temple Hills Camp and Retreat Center. If you want to change the world, send a child or youth to camp. Or better yet, volunteer to help out.

Because of the urgencies of the planet, we now have an emerging climate care network. Because drug overdose deaths reached an all-time record last year, we now have a harm reduction and drug overdose prevention network that has produced a curriculum to help churches engage this critical reality.

The great thing about networks is that you don't have to sign up for a term. You can engage at the level that fits for you. If you want to find out more, go to heartlanducc.org. But there is more that God is at work doing in and through us that stretches beyond the geographical boundaries of the Heartland Conference.

You see this thing of ministry in the name of Jesus Christ as you well know is a work local and a work global. Two years ago BC... late January and early February I traveled on your behalf to Southern Asia, to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India as part of an initiative to bear witness and offer support our partners in that part of God's creation.

You have been supporting Post Traumatic Stress Disorder treatment for people in the northern region of Sri Lanka in the Jaffna diocese. Pastors from Sri Lanka have come to Eden Theological Seminary gaining training in trauma treatment. Then they have returned to tend the emotional wounds of their people who for 30 years suffered due to civil war.

In Bangladesh, you have been supporting women's business development in an area of the world where climate change is cutting in half the growing season among the poorest of the poor. Daily you have been supporting internally displaced refugees in Syria with food and water relief through the work of our partners, the Forum for Development Culture and Dialogue.

And those are just a few of the stories from our nearly 300 global partners in 90 countries around the world who share in our response to the commission of Jesus Christ to meet all God's people at the place of deepest need.

Closer to home, right now, we are building hope for new beginnings as we are actually working together with the Christian Church/Disciples of Christ to form a long-term disaster recovery ministry right here in the Dayton area organizing work teams coming to build and rebuild houses for those rendered housing insecure by the tornados that hit this area two years ago. Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing support this effort. These opportunities to serve are being scheduled now and you can find out more about those by going to our website.

Just one more thing, I hope you will be part of the 2022 Challenge. Across our life we are working to put together 2022 hygiene kits and disaster buckets. Matching grants are available for this if you haven't already engaged this great opportunity.

If you haven't quite caught on, or in case you have forgotten, you and I are in a web of blessing and mutual encouragement and support that daily changes the lives of people near and far. Your gifts to Our Churches Wider Mission make these life-giving connections possible – right here in Ohio and around the world.

I could go on and on, sharing about church renewal, support of our Native American Congregations, and support of pastors who, in retirement, struggle to make ends meet because of their life-long

commitment to serve smaller churches. I could share about our work with our designated health and human service ministry partners – Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi, UCH, Crossroad, Emmaus homes.

Now this is about more than just money. These gifts are about an energy and capacity for love to foster the hope of a new beginning to become real in the life of the world right here where you live and around the globe because that is the commission of Jesus Christ.

So I say, thank you from the bottom of my heart, dear friends for your faithfulness to this mission of love which we share together near and far. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Now you know, all of this ministry has a starting point that begins with a call and a claim of God's agape love on our lives. It is not of our own making but by it, if we are willing to consent to this motion of Holy Love, we are remade again and again by this large Spirit which has the capacity to turn everything upside down and all around. It is the grand reversal of God's resurrecting power.

So, in our text this morning, Paul and Silas are in Macedonia, a province of Rome. And there is a woman whose life has been imprisoned by others who are making money off her fortune-telling ability. But there is something that cannot be imprisoned. It is her witness that Paul and Silas are servants of God's work of salvation – that is ultimate healing.

Strangely, Paul gets annoyed by this testimony and he orders the spirit of divination to come out of her and it does. But because of this those who were making money off her life hatch a scheme that gets Paul and Silas thrown into prison. But not just thrown into prison, flogged, and put in the deepest cell and placed in stocks.

But the story is not over. From the tomb of this prison, they begin to pray and sing songs of praise. And everything is opened up. The foundation of fear is split apart. The life-giving door of discovery that God's power can transform everything shakes through the whole system.

It would seem to be good news for everyone, except the jailer, who fears that his prisoners will have naturally escaped and so he prepares to take his own life. But the alive word of transformation comes from the depths of the prison, as an unshackled echo of promise, "Do not harm yourself." Which evokes a question, "What must I do to be saved?" And the answer is, "Believe"... which I would remind you means "trust" in the

Lord Jesus Christ. Trust that the same power to resurrect Christ can and does hold your life.

And so, at midnight, at the darkest hour, in the deepest place of the prison, wounds get washed, and baptism forms a new creation. And strangely everyone is freed for a new life.

I wonder if you have ever had someone utter a life-giving word like this to you giving space for Love, capital L's, grand reversal? I wonder if you have been that person along the way who has offered a life-giving grace that has freed up someone else?

I must tell you that on this Mother's Day, I have been thinking of my mom who passed away twelve years ago this past week. She had colon cancer. As you may have discovered in your own experience, these kinds of things have a way of knocking the wind out of you, covering over your spirit, imprisoning you, and most days just hoping for one more day.

But on such journeys, you may know from your own experience, there is often a threshold that one approaches where the end seems too clear. My mom and I had birthdays in the same week of March. So, in that last year of her life, as she turned 80, the weekend of our celebration came to a close.

But before I left, I told her that I must have one more conversation. There is a poignancy as you likely know to such conversations, especially when the one you love has been the one who has dressed you in love for your whole life. So, we went into my parents' bedroom, and I named the terrible and precious moment in which we found ourselves. I dared to name out loud that this could well be the last face-to-face conversation we would ever have.

I told her how much I loved her and how I hoped I had not been too much of a disappointment to her (you know the story of your life runs quickly before you in such moments, the stupid stuff you did growing up). And what she did, I will never forget. Frail, yet strong, she took my head in her hands and said to me, "You have never been a disappointment, only a joy. And she looked into my eyes and said, "I love you". I offered back the same. We embraced in tears. You see, she allowed the Spirit to open the door of my prison.

And then she offered a word of encouragement as she so often had. "Do not let your words fall to silence," she told me, "The world needs

encouragement.” She was telling me, you know, that there is a largeness to life that extends beyond the chapter formed in the present moment.

As I headed to the airport I was aware of so many different things. I remembered that she had taught me a bedtime prayer as a child. Maybe you know it? *Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.* As I remembered that prayer, I thought what an odd thing to teach a three or four year old.

But then I realized it wasn't odd at all. She was cloaking me both in the truth of my mortality, and that of all of us who walk on the earth, and also the truth of God's love that will never let us go. From the earliest years of my life she had been preparing me not just for my death but for hers.

In such threshold times, oh how we yearn for a few more days or years to savor the presence of God in each other. At other times, that presence will come in ways we do not expect from another direction. And it will be just enough. Just enough to open us up to the new thing that God is seeking to make known and to do in our lives, and by our response in the life of the world.

So that last day of my mother's life came. Four of us six children were gathered with my dad around my mother's hospice bed in their apartment. Her breathing slowed and my dad asked me to offer a prayer. And when I said "Amen" she breathed her last breath. And I remembered, if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.

But then dad's phone rang. He ignored it. It rang again. He ignored it. It rang again. My brother suggested that he answer because maybe God was calling. It was their pastor who in that very moment was with members of the church choir outside their second story window and they were singing *God of Grace and God of Glory, on your people pour your power.*

And my sister, out in Portland, Oregon, who had been promised by my mother the sign of a rainbow as a confirmation of her alive presence, looked out her window on the sunniest of days saw a rainbow plain as day. I know it's not supposed to work like that but sometimes it does. And you discover in those moments that there is whole lot more going on than your post-modern mind can wrap itself around.

No matter, because God is the one doing the wrapping, the healing, shaking the foundations of every prison that holds us, so that even in grief we may discover ourselves strangely inspired – filled with the Spirit of the Holy One. And not only inspired but freed to bear witness in word and deed and song, to a largeness of love that will not be imprisoned or entombed by anything.

I have a feeling you know what I am talking about. Keep spreading the word, first admitting to yourself, then saying it out loud to your family, then scatter it into the world. “Christ is Risen, Christ is Risen indeed.” Thanks be to God!

I give thanks to God for you and for the opening of imprisoned hearts that God will make possible because of the testimony of your shared life which is a vessel of God’s grand reversal made possible in, by, and for *agape* love. You are a gift and a blessing, dear people of St. Paul. And I give thanks to God for you and for our life together.

Godspeed. Amen and amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Each week, when you give your tithe/your offering to God, you are making a spiritual gift of thanksgiving for all God has given to you. It is an act of graciousness, of appreciation for God’s work throughout our daily lives. We are invited to be generous for we are returning to God a portion of what God has given us. Let us give generously and joyfully—not holding back, but offering our whole lives to God.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow 34

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow'. It is written in G major and 4/4 time. The score consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment line. The lyrics are: 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here be-low; praise him a - bove, ye heaven-ly host: praise Fa - ther, Son and Ho - ly Ghost.'

Chords for the first system: G, D, Em, Bm, Em, D, G, D, Em, C, G, D.

Chords for the second system: Em, D/F#, G, D, G/B, C, F#dim/A, G, Em, D, Am, G/B, D7, G.

WORDS: *Doxology*, Thomas Ken (1637-1711)
MUSIC: Louis Bourgeois (ca. 1510-1561), *Genevan Psalter*, 1551

OLD 100th
L.M.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

We bring our offerings before you, Holy God. We ask that you bless them and use them for your glory. Even when we cannot see the ending of our efforts, we know that your Spirit has the power to enter our hearts and transform our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HYMN OF SENDING

Amazing Grace!

Verses 1, 3, 5

Amazing Grace!

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Musical notation for the first system of the hymn. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a five-line staff. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: G, G/D, D7, Em, C, G, G/D, D/C, G/B. Below the staff, the lyrics for verses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are written in a simple, readable font.

1 A - maz - ing grace! how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears re-lieved;
3 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his word my hope se - cures;
4 Through man - y dan - gers, toils and snares I have al - read - y come;
5 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright shin - ing as the sun,

Musical notation for the second system of the hymn. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a five-line staff. Above the staff, the following chords are indicated: G, G/B, C, G, G/B, Em, G/D, D7, G. Below the staff, the lyrics for verses 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 are written in a simple, readable font.

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see.
how pre - cious did that grace ap - pear the hour I first be-lieved!
he will my shield and por - tion be as long as life en-dures.
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Pass the Love

Pass the Love

Love our God, ev - 'ry day, praise with joy go-ing on your way.
Pass it on, t'all you meet, ev - 'ry day in__ ev - 'ry way.
Love our Ho - ly God. Pray with hope each day.
Bless the Ho - ly Name. Praise our__ God.

Chords: F, Gm7, F, Gm7, F/A, F/Bb, Gm9, C7, F, Gm7, F, Gm7, F/A, F/Bb, Gm9, G7, C, Fmaj7, Dm, F/G, F/C, Am7, Dm7, Gm7, F/C, C7, F.

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: In Christ we are a new creation. Let us joyfully pass the peace of Christ with one another.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are in loving memory of Albert and Helen Schrolucke by Katie Blumhorst and Daniel Sok.

Participants-Daily Devotions-46, April 24-Sunday Worship Online-218, In Person-81, Sunday School-23, Teachers-5.

Sundays in May-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: Unafraid—Living with Courage and Hope in Uncertain Times-Thursday's at 6:30pm. We meet in the Library.

Women's Service Group-will be meeting on Thursday, May 12th at 11:30am in the church's South parking lot for carpooling to Lake Loramie for a lunch of chicken and covered dishes. All are to bring a covered dish to accompany the chicken. We will be planning our meetings and outings for the 2022-2023 year. Boat rides will be available if weather permits. All women of the church are welcome. Please call Bev Plattner before Monday, May 9th if you plan to attend. Come and enjoy a day at the lake. Hope to see you there. Bev Plattner & Joyce Gilberg, Chairpersons

Widow and Widower Luncheon-The next Widow, Widower Luncheon will be at 11:30 am on Wednesday, May 11. All are welcome to come for a time of eating, sharing and laughter. Immanuel Church Fellowship Hall, Kettlersville.

Donut Sale-County Crossroads 4H Club will be selling donuts as a fundraiser here at St Paul after worship on May 15. Glaze and twist donuts are available. They will be sold individually-\$1.25, half dozen-\$7.50 and a dozen for \$15.00. You may place a pre-order by contacting Megan or Ashton Ritter or any other member of County Crossroads 4H Club. Thank you for your support.

St. Paul UCC Prayer Chain-I, Jeff Paul, will be the new leader of the prayer chain going forward. I encourage all members of St. Paul UCC to be involved in the prayer chain. For those interested please email or text me and let me know how you would prefer to receive the prayer requests (either email, text or both). For those wanting to submit a prayer request, you may either email or text me with the details as you would like me to present them to the prayer chain. I will get your request out as soon as possible. I'm looking forward to building this ministry of St. Paul. Jeff Paul

MAY MISSION: CROSSROAD CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

Many children struggle – either because of who they are or because of what’s happened to them. They have emotional and behavioral difficulties. Crossroad Child and Family Services in Ft. Wayne, Indiana is where they get help, healing and hope. Children who come to Crossroad learn to value themselves and others. For decades, judges, educators, social service professionals, and parents have turned to Crossroad for help with troubled children. Crossroad has become the rock of certainty for its children and for those who love and care about them. Crossroad offers a continuum of care that meets the needs of hurting children and families in Indiana – and beyond to neighboring states such as ours. This non-profit treatment provider for at-risk children and their families needs our support. The UCC established Crossroad in 1883 and St. Paul has been a continual supporter to this organization. Let’s continue our support! Thank you!

NEW DISASTER BUCKETS & LIST FOR CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Green Five Gallon buckets and lids can be picked up in the front of the sanctuary or by the church office to be filled with all kinds of supplies for disaster relief. The buckets and lids are free for the taking and to be filled with the list of supplies listed on the sheet of paper inside each bucket. For every bucket you fill, the Northwest Ohio Association will give St. Paul Church grant money to fill another bucket. This one-to-one match will allow twice as many buckets to be filled to help our neighbors in times of great need. Thank you for once again stepping up to help those in need after a natural disaster. –The Mission Team

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-Baby Wipes, Diaper Cream, Safety Q-tips, Body Wash, Shampoo(Regular & Baby), Conditioner, Razors, Shaving Cream, Deodorant, Toothpaste, Bandages, Kleenex, Paper Plates, Garbage Bags, Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Laundry Detergent, Diapers (size 3-6), and Pull Ups (size 2-6). Thank you!** There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

May/June 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.

Calendar-Week of May 8, 2022

Sunday	9:00am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
	9:00am	Sunday School
	10:15am	Worship 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
	7:00pm	Church Council
Wednesday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Thursday	11:30am	Devotions via Facebook Live
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
	11:30am	Women's Service Group
Friday	6:30pm	Bible Study
	Noon	Office Closed



When: May 16, 2022

Who: Everyone

Where: St. Paul Assembly Room

Serving: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Menu: Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Macaroni Salad, Applesauce, Chips, Dessert

Grillers: Holy Redeemer Men's Group

Servers: Buckeye Hustlers 4-H

Carry-outs Available, Free Chair Massages

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 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.