

St. Paul United Church of Christ

119 North Franklin Street New Bremen, Ohio 45869

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Visit our website at https://stpaulnb.org

Like and follow our page St. Paul United Church of Christ – New

Bremen, Ohio on Facebook

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

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

Whether you are worshipping online or in person, Welcome! Your presence increases our joy as we praise our loving Savior.

May every blessing be yours.

January 7 and 8, 2023 Epiphany Sacrament of Holy Communion

Worship Leaders

Ministers The Congregation Rev. Becky Erb Strang **Senior Pastor** Accompanist (Saturday) Katie Brautigam Connie O'Neill Organist (Sunday) Bryan Trego Liturgist June Oaks Sr. Deacon Bryan Trego Sr. Elder Chancel Choir/Music Director Jim Strang

PRELUDE

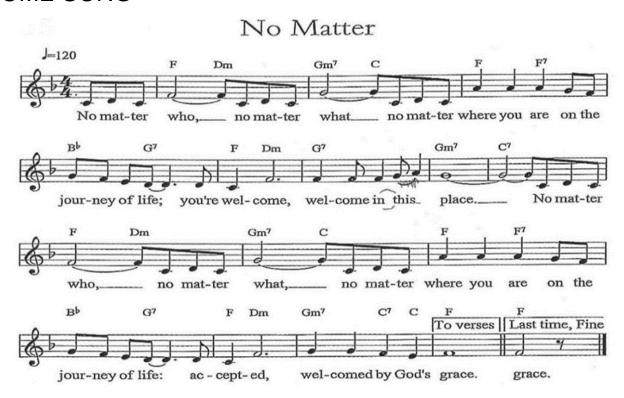
LIGHTING OF CANDLES: You are invited to light a candle or candles at home in preparation for worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MOMENT FOR MISSION: Church World Service Blankets (CWS)

Church World Service has been involved with disaster response for many years, in many ways, and in many places. One way CWS helps is by supplying blankets for people who have been involved in all kinds of tragedies-floods, hurricanes, fires and yes tornadoes. Three years ago tornadoes ripped through the poorest section of east Dayton. Many houses were damaged or destroyed and CWS supplied blankets to families and other assistance as well as clean up buckets. The blankets come in two different weights and can be used in various ways, not only to keep warm but as make shift tents for protection from the elements. Our mission offering for January will be designated for CWS. Thank you for your support. The Mission Team.

WELCOME SONG



CALL TO WORSHIP (from The Worship Sourcebook)

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

People: The Magi who study the heavens follow a guiding star! Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

People: The peoples who live in the shadows see a glorious light!

Leader: O come, let us worship the Lord and consider what wondrous things God has done:

People: The Christ who embodies the Word unveils the hidden plan,

Leader: Making us joint heirs of the promise of salvation through the gospel!

People: O come, let us worship the Lord, for God has done wondrous things!

EPIPHANY CAROL

We Three Kings of Orient Are

EPIPHANY

KINGS OF ORIENT 8.8.8.6.Ref.

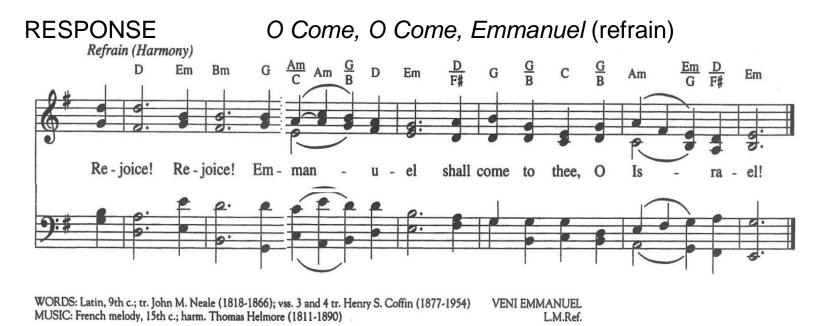
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We Three Kings of Orient Are



INVOCATION (in unison)

Everlasting God, you brought the nations to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising. Fill the world with your glory, and show yourself to all the nations, through him who is the true light and the bright morning star, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Following the Light to Jesus! **Birth Candle** welcomes Eloise Lyn Staton born December 28, 2022. She is the daughter of Karli and Bennett Staton, granddaughter of Staci and Gary Jones. Great granddaughter of Mary Finke and John and Nancy Knost. Welcome Eloise!

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Becky Quellhorst, Barb Tostrick, Larry Kuhn, Betty Bushman, Rob Paul, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Karen Vornholt, Shannon Shupp, and Dee Schroer.

EPIPHANY INTERCESSION FOR CHURCH AND WORLD

Leader: Let us pray for the church.

SILENCE

Leader: God, whose promise is for all nations, sustain the Christmas glory still. May the Lord shine upon us. By the Holy Spirit, reveal your plan. We pray to our God:

People: May your love be near.

Leader: Let us pray for God's light.

SILENCE

Leader: May the nations walk by your light and kings and queens by your shining radiance. Let all search together for profound peace. We pray to our God

People: May your love be near.

Leader: We pray for those without strength.

SILENCE

Leader: Save the lives of the poor. Rescue them as they cry out. Govern your people with justice. We pray to our God:

People: May your love be near.

Leader: Let us pray for those in need of comfort and healing.

SILENCE

Leader: May your healing light surround those within our family of faith and our community. May we be instruments of your healing love. We pray to our God:

People: May your love be near.

Leader: Let us pray for unity among all believers.

SILENCE

Leader: Bring the new epiphany where all will share your promise and rise in splendor. In the Spirit, all are called to love. We pray to our God:

People: May your love be near. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (sung to the tune of Away in a Manger)
Creator in heaven, all praise to your name!
Your kingdom among us, your will done the same.
By mortals and angels, come, Lord, reign alone!
O hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.

The bread that we yearn for, provide it each day As we forgive others, our sins take away. In times of temptation, to lead us be near. From evil deliver your children most dear.

For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign; And yours is the glory, all things you maintain

To you be the glory, resounding again From all of creation, forever! Amen!

EPIPHANY LESSON: Matthew 2:1-12

(The Message)

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory—this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him."

3-4 When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?"

5-6 They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote

It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear.

it plainly:

From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel."

- ⁷⁻⁸ Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship."
- ⁹⁻¹⁰ Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time!
- 11 They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh.
- ¹² In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country.

RESPONSE

Leader: The word of God for the people of God! People: God is still speaking! Thanks be to God!

CHANCEL CHOIR ANTHEM (Sunday)

SERMON Rev. Becky Erb Strang

On this first weekend of Epiphany, we hear in the Gospel of Matthew a story of surprise and intrigue. Strangers from far away worshipping a tiny child—offering gifts befitting a king. A grown-up king consumed with jealousy and power. A star shining brightly, guiding the way and lighting the path of those seeking the Messiah. It IS a surprising story: the shepherds and angels are gone; Mary and Joseph say nothing; and the main actors are Herod, men from the east, and the guiding, shining star.

Yet, it is the gifts given to Jesus that seem most baffling. When babies are born today, we bring gifts of pampers and pajamas. This child, however, received gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gold, in Jesus' day, was often presented as a gift for kings. Frankincense and myrrh were incense and spices used in worship, used to make anointing oil, and used for burial. What odd gifts to give this newborn babe.

Indeed, as we move out of the season of gift-giving, of ribbons and wrappings, we see that God's gifts at Epiphany shine brightly in new and surprising ways upon our lives.

I am reminded of Richard Paul Evans' short novel <u>The Christmas Box</u>. It is the story about a young family who made ends meet by sharing the mansion of a wealthy and elderly matriarch named Mary. Mary was deeply concerned that the young father had hardly any time for his 4- year old daughter. She would give him stories to read to her; she would encourage him to play with his daughter. Then, as Christmas approached, she asked the father one evening, "Have you ever wondered what the first gift of Christmas was?"

The father was baffled. What did this have to do with spending time with his daughter? How was he supposed to know the answer? Could the first gift of Christmas been gold? Perhaps frankincense or myrrh? What exactly was Mary asking of him?

Epiphany means to reveal or show. Like the young father, we seek an Epiphany—a revealing of an answer to our confusion. Like the Magi, we obediently follow the star to Bethlehem. Like Herod—far too often we deny Christ's light as we grasp for power or prestige. Epiphany's star shines that we might see ourselves exactly as we are—a curious combination of Magi and Mad Ruler.

So here we are: we have celebrated the birth of Christ; and now, like the Magi, we gather at Epiphany to present gifts to this blessed Child.

What gifts do we bring? I seriously doubt that many of us arrived at church today, pockets filled with gold, frankincense, or myrrh. What gifts DO we offer to Christ—the Messiah of our hearts?

The first gift that comes immediately to my mind is the gift of this congregation. St. Paul United Church of Christ has stood as a beacon of hope to our community nearly two centuries. God's light has shined brightly and powerfully in our village, neighboring communities, our nation and the world.

So, how do we offer ourselves to the community? How can we let God's light shine through us?

There are so many ways we can let Christ's light shine—primarily by loving God and loving our neighbors. This I believe: the greatest gift we can bring to the Christ Child at Epiphany is our commitment to lay ministry—the priesthood of all believers. At Epiphany, we celebrate the gifts offered not by priests and pastors, but by wise men from the East. In other words, we ALL are ministers. We are ALL called by God to be lights shining in the darkness. We are ALL called to sing God's praises in all that we are and all that we do. I am merely the pastor of this church. YOU are the ministers—caring for one another, welcoming visitors, comforting the grieving, living the gospel day in and day out.

In a few minutes, we will share in yet another gift: the gift of Communion, the gift of Christ revealed to us in the bread and cup. Communion is a gift God shares with us through Christ. AND, it is also a gift we share with one another. Whenever a family—and that includes our faith family—gathers around the table, we become gifts to one another and to God. When we share in the elements of earth and Spirit, of bread and of Body, we are sharing in a gift of grace.

On Epiphany Weekend, the Magi remind us that Jesus was born, not just for the Hebrew people, but for all people. At Epiphany, their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh remind us that Jesus is king of our hearts and our lives. At Epiphany, we follow the Star to Jesus—who calls us to a life of ministry and mission.

Remember the story of <u>The Christmas Box</u>—of Mary and the young father? Well, that young man agonized for weeks over what could possibly be the first gift of Christmas. Then, as Mary lay dying, he understood. The first gift of Christmas was not gold or frankincense. The first gift of Christmas was not wrapped in fancy ribbons or ornate paper. The first gift of Christmas was—and is forever and ever—the gift of love.

When we follow the star to Bethlehem, when we worship the Christ Child, when we make Jesus the king of our hearts, the gift we offer is love.

Epiphany is a season of gifts, a season of light, and a season of love. As we move into a new year, my prayer is that it will also be a Year of Epiphanies. That we will shine our light not only on our past, but into the future—a mere heart-beat in God's time.

May each of us become lights shining in the darkness as we follow the star to Christ our King! Amen.

ORDER FOR AFFIRMATION OF MINISTRY

(INSTALLATION OF LAY LEADERS)

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Grace, mercy and peace to you from Jesus Christ, the head of the church in heaven and on earth.

Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby the local church of the United Church of Christ recognizes the diverse gifts of its members and celebrates the particular ministry of each person in the life of the church. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit gives them.

People: There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served.

Leader: There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our particular service.

People: The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

Leader: Christ is like a single body, which has many parts.

People: It is still one body even though it is made up of different parts.

Leader: If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share in its happiness.

People: All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it. PRESENTATION

Leader: These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of St. Paul Church to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Myra Hanenkratt President

Matt Ranly Vice President

Mimi Messick Recording Secretary

Lynda Ranly
Bryan Trego
Sr. Elder
Shelly Zeller
June Oaks
Sr. Deacon

Elyssa Mullins Jr. Deacon

Tom Brandewie Trustee
Lindsay Quellhorst Trustee
Tim Nevels Trustee

COVENANT

Leader: Sisters and brothers in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for particular service as members of Church Council. Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve with the help of God in Christ's name and for the glory of God?

Council Members: I am

Leader: Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ?

Council Members: I do, relying on God's grace.

Leader: Members of this household of faith, you have heard the promises of our brothers and sisters in Christ who have answered God's call to serve on Church Council. Let us affirm our intention to live in

covenant with them. Will those who are able please stand and witness to the commitment we now make?

Congregational Response: We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

PRAYER (in unison): Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in this household of faith and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united in Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name. Amen.

DECLARATION

Leader: In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the people of St. Paul United Church of Christ, I rejoice to announce that you are installed in your respective positions. Go in peace. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Let us give as we are able: joyfully and generously!

DOXOLOGY/CAROL In the Bleak Midwinter (Sunday)



PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Loving and receptive God, creator of a Bethlehem birth and sustainer of the whole human family, we come to you seeking to be wise women and wise men. Like the gifts of those travelers long ago, may our gifts be a sign that wisdom is marked by an offering of self and substance to Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION: The refrain of the song, "Crowded Table" by the Highwomen serves today as our invitation:

I want a house with a crowded table

And a place by the fire for everyone

Let us take on the world while we're young and able

And bring us back together when the day is done

It is Jesus himself who invites us to this crowded table—young and old, rich and poor. All are welcome. All are fed. All our nourished. Let us pray.

COMMUNION PRAYER (in unison)

We thank you, God, for sending a star to guide the wise ones to the Christ child. But even more, we praise you for signs and witnesses in every generation that lead us to Christ. We thank you for the covenant first made with Israel—promising to be Israel's light and salvation. You made Israel your people and promised that through them all the peoples of the world would be blessed.

We thank you for prophets who declared your Word, for priests who made sacrifices for the sins of many, to kings and rulers who ruled with justice, lifted up the poor and needy and defended the people from their enemies.

In sending Christ, the light of the world, you revealed your glory to the nations. You sent a star to guide seekers of wisdom to Bethlehem that they might worship Christ. Your signs and witnesses in every age lead people from every place to worship him. We praise you that in him we become your children, baptized into your service.

This child of Mary and Joseph was indeed the Son of God, the one who revealed your glory, transforming sin to goodness, disease to health, despair to hope, sorrow to joy, and death to life.

As we come together to eat at your table, we offer ourselves to you in praise and thanksgiving for your mighty acts. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader: Through the broken Bread, we participate in the Body of Christ.

Leader: Through the Cup of Blessing, we participate in the new life Christ gives. The gifts of God for the people of God. All things are now ready.

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

Leader (with the Bread): The Body of Christ. The Bread of Heaven. Take and eat!

People: Amen!

Leader (with the Cup): The Blood of Christ. The Cup of Salvation! Take and drink!

People: Amen!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (in unison)

Eternal God, you have called your people from east and west and north and south to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. We give thanks that you have refreshed us with the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



BENEDICTION

Leader: You are the light of the world! Let your light so shine that others may see the good things you do and glorify God!

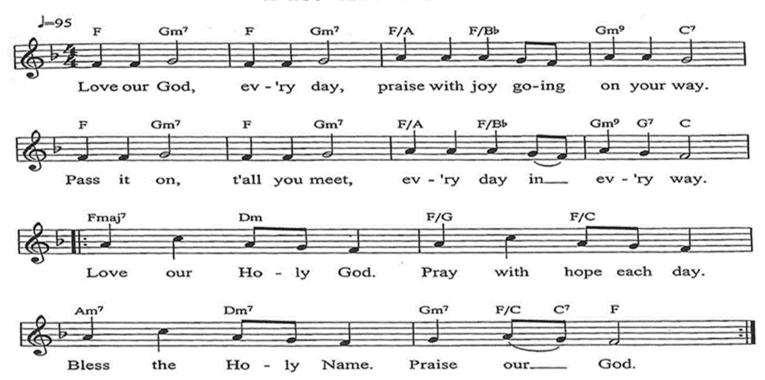
People: God is with us now and always.

Leader: Go in peace. Amen

People: And amen!

BENEDICTION RESPONSE Pass the Love

Pass the Love



PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

POSTLUDE

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are in memory of Loved Ones by Alice Hartwig.

Circle of Friends Cards for you to sign are (East door), (South door), (North door). Recipients appreciate the cards you sign.

Participants-December 24-Open House-38, 11:00pm Worship Online-228, In Person-78, December 25 Worship In Person-58, Online-231.

Sundays in January-Worship will be in person and via Facebook Live at 10:15am. **Saturday, January 7-Worship** will be in the chapel at 5:00pm with Holy Communion.

Daily Devotions-Please join us, Monday-Thursday, online via Facebook Live. These will air on our Facebook page: St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH. They will be saved to our Facebook page.

Elmwood Worship- Tuesday, January 10, 2023 at 2:00pm. All are welcome to assist Rev. Becky with this wonderful service. Please meet her by 1:45pm at Elmwood.

Women's Service Group-will meet January 12 at 11:30am in the Assembly room for a soup lunch followed by the movie *Green Book*. All are welcome! Please RSVP to Sally Dicke by January 9.

Hymn Sing Sunday: January 29-Back by popular demand! On the fifth Sunday of January, we will have a hymn sing. You can cast your vote for your favorite hymn(s) by writing them on a Worship Card and placing it in the offering plate no later than January 15. Let us make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

January Book Club-All are welcome to St. Paul UCC's Zoom Room at 11:30 on Sunday, January 29 for our monthly Book Club. We will discuss Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Books can be picked up on the table outside Pastor Becky's office. This event is offered in-person and via

Zoom:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82332803465?pwd=WVIBdXoxM3FIUGRMT Gg4NmhFSVgwQT09 Meeting ID: 823 3280 3465 Passcode: 134323

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

2023 Altar Flower Chart has open dates: January 15, 22, February 19, April 30, May 21, June 25, July 2, 30, August 20, 27, October 1, 29, December 17, 31. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. You may also call the church office Monday-Thursday to sign up. 2023 altar flower price will be \$40.00. Thank you.

Annual Report Articles-Please turn your report in for the February 26, 2023 Congregational Meeting by January 30. We would like reports from the following: 2022 Council President, Stewardship Board, 2022 Council Treasurer, Maintenance/Trustees, Technology, Sr. Deacon, Sr. Elder, Music Department, Worship Team, Mission Team, Called to Care Team, Discipleship Team, Blessing Pantry, Art Camp Festival, Prayer Chain and Lay Minister of Visitation, Women's Service Group.

2023 Offering Envelopes-are available in the Southwest corner of the sanctuary in front of the pews for pickup. Thank 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-Dish Soap, Body Wash, Bar Soap, Hand Soap, Toilet Paper, Kleenex, Deodorant, Shampoo, Conditioner, Toothpaste, Razors, Shaving Cream, Diapers (sizes N, 4, 5 & 6), Baby Wipes, Tampons, Bandages, Cotton Balls, Manicure Items, Food Storage Bags, Garbage Bags, Paper Plates, Napkins, Bleach, All Purpose Cleaner, Disinfectants. Thank you! There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

St. Paul Church Nursery-is fully staffed during the entire Sunday worship service. Please spread the word to let young parents know this is available. If you would like to volunteer in the nursery, please contact Justine Homan, Nursery Champion.

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.

Want to be part of the Prayer Chain? Please contact Prayer Chain Champion, Jeff Paul. The St. Paul Prayer Chain has two formats: texting and email. All are welcome.

January/February 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 January 8, 2023		
Sunday	9:00am	Sunday School
	9:30am	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
	10:15am	Worship-w/Holy Communion
		In Person & via Facebook Live
	11:30am	Worship Team
Monday		Devotions via Facebook Live
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop-NB Coffee Shop
Tuesday		Devotions via Facebook Live
	2:00pm	Elmwood Worship
	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry Open
	7:00pm	Church Council
Wednesday		Devotions via Facebook Live
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
	5:30pm-6:30pm	Splash
	6:00pm	Bells
	6:30pm	Youth Dinner
	7:00pm-8:00pm	Jr/Sr High Youth Group

	7:00pm-8:00pm	Confirmation
	7:00pm	Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Thursday		Devotions via Facebook Live
•	11:30am	Women's Service Group
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
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 gl (hit send)
- > For building & property fund giving: Send 25 bp (hit send)
 - > For Blessing Pantry: Send 25 pantry (hit send)
 - > For project of the year giving: Send 25 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