

**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. Ken Locke- Interim Pastor [stpaulpastor@nktelco.net](mailto:stpaulpastor@nktelco.net)

Myra Hanenkratt- Council President 419-305-3652



Cover Art by Gavin Quellhorst

**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.

**IN PERSON WORSHIP NOTES:**

**Bulletins**, Offering Plates, and Masks are available on tables.

**Listening devices** are available in the Narthex/front entrance, for those who need them. Please return your device to an Usher following worship. Thank you!

**Children's Activity Bags** containing children's bulletins and other activities are available on the tables. Thank you!

**Restrooms** are located in the Narthex/front entrance of the church and in the south hallway of the educational building.

**WIFI Connection**-connect via "St Paul – Guest"

Password: godlovesyou

The \* indicates all who are able may stand.

**December 17, 2023**  
**3rd Sunday of Advent**

**Worship Leaders**

Ministers  
Interim Pastor  
Accompanist  
Liturgist  
Sr. Deacon

The Congregation  
Rev. Ken Locke  
Arianne Henry  
Mike Holdren  
June Oaks

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES

We Gather Together

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE:

Ezra writes of the rebuilding of God's holy temple; after their exile, God's people are restored.

*(Light 1<sup>st</sup> Advent Candle)* This is the candle of hope, and it illuminates God's promise.

*(Light 2<sup>nd</sup> Advent Candle)* This is the candle of love, and its light leads us in God's way.

*(Light 3<sup>rd</sup> Advent Candle)* This is the candle of joy, and it shows us God's healing and wholeness.

**Lord Jesus, light of the world, come quickly.**

\*OPENING SONG

*Joy to the World!*

No. 179 verse 1

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also, with you.**

Leader: Let us lift up our hearts.

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Leader: We await the coming of Christ,

**People: We will make our hearts holy temples to receive him.**

Leader: We await the coming of Christ.

**People: With rejoicing, we wait. With rejoicing, we worship our past, present, and future savior.**

**\*HYMN**

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

No. 153

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

Leader: With sorrow for our sins and rejoicing for expectant mercy, we confess our sins before God and one another.

**\*CONFESSION**

Leader: Ever-present God, we come before you in need of grace.

**People: Too often our thoughts are judgmental and condemning, as damaging as fists and cudgels. Too often our words are sarcastic or harsh, as cutting as knives and swords. Too often our actions are motivated by selfishness, and we do not recognize the hurt or need in others. Too often we make our home in an idealized past and neglect the needs of the present.**

Leader: Forgive us, O God, and draw us back into right relationship with you, our neighbors, and your creation.

*(TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION)*

**\*PARDON**

**Leader:** The promise is sure: Christ's arrival is near, and in Christ we are forgiven all our sin. Believe the good news – we are God's beloved children and are forgiven through Jesus our Lord.

**People:** In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

*Glory Be to the Father*

F B♭ F C7 F C7 F

Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and the Son and the Ho - ly Ghost. As it

5 Gm C7 F Dm Gm C7 F

was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be, world with - out end, A - men. As it

9 Gm C7 F Dm Gm C7 F

was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be, world with - out end, A - men.

13 Am Dm Gm C7 Am Dm Gm C7 Am Dm Gm C7 F B♭

A - men. A - men. A - men. A - men. A - men. A - men. A - men.

God's Word Is Proclaimed

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-5, 10-13

(OT) pg. 421

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Luke 2:22-38

(NT) pg. 58

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

**\*HYMN**

*How Firm a Foundation*

No. 411

SERMON

*A New Temple!*

Rev. Locke

## We Respond to God's Word

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

Leader: In anticipation of our coming Messiah, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need. God of the nations, you worked through Cyrus to bring healing to your people in their work of rebuilding the temple. Continue to bring restoration to your world through those we might least expect.

**People: God of promise, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Leader: Commit us to the work of stewardship of the beautiful world you have created, that we may bring restoration to damaged ecosystems and improve the health of the world you proclaimed "good".

**People: God of creation, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Leader: Inspire our leaders to work for the restoration of the communities they serve, that all may live fully in joyful and loving relationship.

**People: God of healthy communities, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Leader: Equip and strengthen all who work to bring healing and health to mind, body, and soul, that together their efforts will lead to restoration of health and the best outcomes for those they serve. Especially today we lift up: Tavi Haastrup, Rob Paul, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Karen Vornholt, Terri Mullins, Denise Joyce, Bev Poppe, Ann Hudson, Dee Schroer, and Virginia Voress.

**People: God of all healing and hope, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Leader: Sustain social workers, community organizers, activists, and all those who work with vulnerable and oppressed populations, so that they may continue offering hope and help to those most in need.

**People: God of justice for the powerless, in your mercy hear our prayer.**

Leader: Loving God of our past and future, we lift up our prayers, spoken and unspoken, into your loving arms, trusting in your love and mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who taught us how to live when he taught us to pray by saying, ...**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. Lead us not into temptation, but**

**deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**WE RESPOND WITH OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS  
OFFERTORY SENTENCES**

**\*DOXOLOGY**     *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow*     No. 34

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise God, all creatures high and low.*

*Praise God, in Jesus fully known.*

*Creator, Word, and Spirit one. Amen.*

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER: God of all, even King Cyrus, a gentile like us, responded to you with gratitude and gave his riches to rebuild your holy temple in Jerusalem. With Cyrus, we offer these gifts to your work of justice and peace in the world. Amen.**

**\*HYMN**                     *We Come, O Christ, to You!*                     No. 110

**\*BENEDICTION:**

Leader: Let all God's people say:

**Alleluia, Amen!**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

No. 154 v. 1, 2, 3

**\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us share Christ's peace with one another!

**\*POSTLUDE**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Altar Flowers** are in memory of Judy Taylor by Michelle and Neal Voress and Family. After Sunday's worship, please take home your altar flowers. They will be kept in the church office after Sunday.

**Circle of Friends Cards** for you to sign are for Tom Topp (South door), Ginny Voress (North door), and Dorothy Schneider (East door). Recipients appreciate the cards you sign.

**Participants-** December 10<sup>th</sup> | Sunday School Youth-31, Teachers-7, Worship In-Person-138, Online-32

### **2023 Financial Information as of December 9, 2023**

#### **Operating Fund**

Endowment Trans \$34,656.63(ytd)  
Income \$297,239.71 (ytd)  
Expenses \$284,315.45(ytd)  
Balance \$ 12,924.26 (ytd)

#### **Building Maint & Property**

Beg. Balance \$56,920.53  
Income \$20,953.90(ytd)  
Endowment Inc.\$33,936.02(ytd)  
Expenses \$23,993.78(ytd)  
Balance \$87,816.67 (ytd)

#### **Project of the Year**

Income \$5,001.50

#### **Local Aid**

Beg. Balance \$9,977.49  
Income \$23,036.74(ytd)  
Expenses \$17,357.73(ytd)  
Balance \$15,676.50(ytd)

#### **Blessing Pantry**

Beg. Balance \$35,371.23  
Income \$14,784.46(ytd)  
Expenses \$19,228.48(ytd)  
Balance \$30,927.21(ytd)

#### **Our Church Wider Mission**

Pledge \$25,000.00  
Income \$23,897.10(ytd)



**New Office Hours-** Please welcome Jenn Snider as our new administrator! As of December 4<sup>th</sup>, the new office hours are M-F, 9:00am–Noon. We are looking for volunteers to answer the phones and do light office work M-W, 9:00am–Noon. Anyone who would like to regularly volunteer their time and talent should please contact the office or Myra. Thank you!

**Church Nursery Champion-** We are looking for a nursery champion. If you feel called to be that person, please contact the church office. In the meantime, if you would like to volunteer on a Communion Sunday (First Sunday of each month) to help in the nursery, please contact the church office until a champion is found.

**December Monthly Mission: UCC Christmas Fund**

"GRACE UPON GRACE": The December Mission is the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross. Our gifts help retired clergy, church staff and their surviving spouses to pay bills, maintain their health insurance and meet emergency needs. These servants of the church have spent lifetimes baptizing and blessing, teaching and preaching, marrying and burying, comforting and empowering us. Now through the Christmas Fund we have the opportunity to sustain and empower them. "And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace John 1:16

The Mission Team thanks you for your continued generosity!!


## DECEMBER EVENTS

**December 17<sup>th</sup> | Worship Team Meeting-** will be held following worship in the assembly room.

**December 17<sup>th</sup> | Christmas Caroling-** at 1:30pm. Come and join us in spreading holiday cheer through the gift of songs! Please see the insert in the back of the bulletin for more details.

**December 20<sup>th</sup> | Youth Group Dinner-** Please meet at church at 6pm and we will carpool to Do Good Restaurant. If you would like to contribute to the “tip of the month” at Do Good, please bring money with you. Pick-up time will be around 8:45-9pm at the church.

**December 21<sup>st</sup> | Community Candlelight Remembrance Service-** This ecumenical service of hope for the holidays will be held from 7:00-8pm at The Church of The Holy Redeemer. All are welcome.



**Community Candlelight  
Remembrance Service**

An ecumenical service of Hope for the Holidays.

**Hosted by:**  
**The Church of the Holy Redeemer**  
120 S. Eastmoor Drive  
New Bremen, Ohio 45869

**Thursday, December 21, 2023**  
**7:00 PM**

**December 24<sup>th</sup> | No Sunday School-** for Christmas Break; Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>- Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>. Sunday School will start back up on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

**December 24<sup>th</sup> | Christmas Services-** This Sunday, we have three worship services lined up. Join us at our regular 10:15am service, then from 5 to 7pm for drop-in communion at 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, & 7:00pm. Finally, a Candlelight Service at 11:00pm. Please see the insert in the back of the bulletin for more details. We look forward to sharing these meaningful moments with you.

**December 27<sup>th</sup> | No Youth Activities-** for Christmas Break; Dec. 27<sup>th</sup>-Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Wednesday youth activities will start back up on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **OTHER NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION**

**2024 Council Candidates-** We are looking for a council candidate to fill the Jr. Deacon position. If you feel God is laying this on your heart or you would like to nominate someone, please reach out to the church office or Myra Hanenkratt.

**2024 Altar Flower Chart** is posted. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. You may also call the church office to sign up. 2024 altar flower price will be \$40.00. Thank you.

**St Paul UCC Job Openings-**The following positions are available: Music Director, Bell Choir Director, and Chancel Choir Director. Interested applicants are asked to submit a resume and cover letter, indicating position applying for, to the church office, attention Myra Hanenkratt, Council President.

The Music Director/Bell Choir Director/Chancel Choir Director serves part time to recruit, rehearse and perform bell and chancel choir music. The Music Director works closely with the Worship Team.

**Blessing Pantry**-is open 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, Paper Towels, Kleenex, Dish Soap, Laundry Soap, Body Wash-Adult, Bar Soap, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Bandages, Cotton Balls, Diapers sizes 3, 4, and 6. Thank you!** There is a container outside the East and North Educational Building doors for donations.

**Want to be part of the Prayer Chain?** Please contact Prayer Chain Champion, Jeff Paul at [jrpaul@nktelco.net](mailto:jrpaul@nktelco.net) or 419-305-0584. The St. Paul Prayer Chain has two formats: texting and email. All are welcome.

## Calendar-Week of December 17, 2023

Sunday	9:00am	Sunday School
	10:15am	Children's Christmas Worship In Person & via Facebook Live
	11:30am	Worship Team Meeting
	1:30pm	Community Christmas Caroling
Monday	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop-NB Coffee Shop
Tuesday	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Wednesday	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
	5:30pm	Splash
	6:30pm	Youth Group Dinner at Do Good Ministries (Meet at Church 6:00pm. Pickup at Church 8:45/9pm)
Thursday	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
	7:00-8:00pm	Community Candlelight Remembrance Service (at Holy Redeemer Church)
Friday	Noon	Office Closed

## **E-Giving @ St. Paul**

**Online** – Make a donation on our website: [stpaulnb.org](http://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.



# JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS CAROLING!

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>

@ 1:30 PM

Come as individuals or families. All ages are invited to join a group from our church for Christmas Caroling to members that may be shut-in or could use an uplifting spirit during the Christmas Season.

We will meet in the Assembly Room and will divide in groups to carol to members close or in New Bremen. Carpooling will be available.

After caroling (at approximately 3pm), we will meet in the Assembly Room for refreshments.

## COME AND JOIN THE FUN!



## Christmas Eve Worship

December 24<sup>th</sup>, **5:00 – 7:00 pm**

Our 5:00 – 7:00 pm Christmas Eve worship will be a modified service of lessons and carols. It is **designed for individuals and families, who may be running to any number of events, to have a few minutes of calm and relaxation.** A few minutes to remember the reason we celebrate and receive spiritual nurture.

**Communion will be offered at 5:30, 6:00, 6:30 and 7:00!**

Before each communion there will be a short time of Scripture and favorite Christmas Carols.

Come when you can, stay as long as you like.



## Christmas Eve Worship

December 24<sup>th</sup>, **11:00 pm**

Our 11:00 pm Christmas Eve worship will be **our more formal, traditional worship service with the added joy of candlelight.**

We'll hear the old, yet always new, story of Jesus' birth and affirm again its importance for our lives. We will again sing "Silent Night", in both German and English, and give thanks for Jesus' life on earth as we look forward to Christ's return in glory. Please join us for this service of solemnity and joy!