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. Ken Locke- Interim Pastor stpaulpastor@nktelco.net Myra Hanenkratt- Council President 419-305-3652



Cover Art by Julia Mullins

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 24, 2023 (10:15 am service) 4th Sunday of Advent

Worship Leaders

Ministers
Interim Pastor
Accompanist
Liturgist
Sr. Deacon

The Congregation Rev. Ken Locke Patty Ruckman Keith May June Oaks

PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES

We Gather Together

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE:

This day, Elizabeth and Zechariah welcome their son, John, who will be a prophet to the promised messiah.

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

(Light 2^{nd} Advent Candle) This is the candle of love, and its light leads us in God's way.

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

(*Light 4th Advent Candle*) This is the candle of peace, and it proclaims Christ's coming reign of justice, when we will make war no more.

Lord Jesus, light of the world, come quickly.

*OPENING SONG

Joy to the World!

No. 179 verse 1

179

Joy to the World!



*CALL TO WORSHIP

<u>Leader:</u> The Lord be with you.

People: And also, with you.

<u>Leader:</u> Let us lift up our hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: We await the coming of Christ,

People: God keeps God's promises to us.

Leader: We await the coming of Christ.

People: With peace in our hearts, we are waiting. With peace in our

hearts, we worship and wait for Christ, our Lord.

*HYMN

Prepare the Way, O Zion

No. 152



WORDS: Frans Mikael Franzen (1772-1847); tr. composite; adapt. Charles P. Price (1920-1999)
MUSIC: Then Swenska Psalmboken, 1697

7.6.7.6.7.7.Ref.

BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN

*CALL TO CONFESSION

<u>Leader</u>: With peace in our hearts, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

*CONFESSION

<u>Leader</u>: God of all, you call us into one Body of Christ for the good of the world.

<u>People:</u> We confess we are often fragmented, disagreeing over petty issues. We confess we too often care more for the good of our own selves than for the good of the world.

We confess we have a habit of feasting on the good news of your word, but not sharing that goodness with our friends who are so desperately hungry.

<u>Leader</u>: Forgive us, Holy God, and draw us back into right relationship with you, our neighbors, and your creation.

People: God, forgive us. Lord, hear our prayer!

(TIME FOR SILENT CONFESSION)

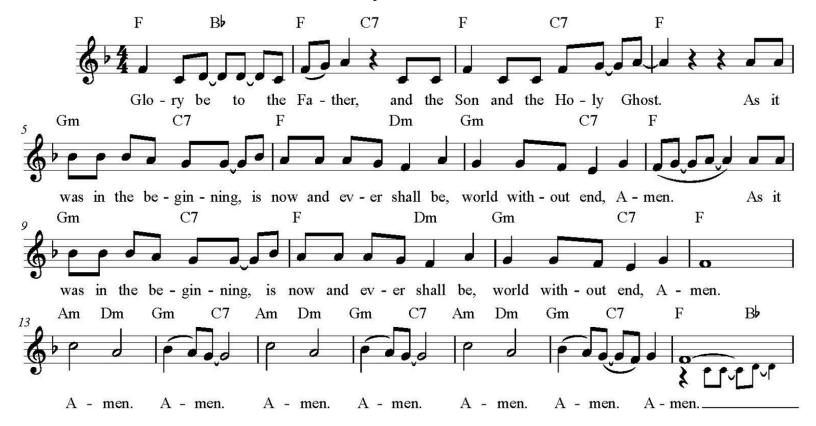
*PARDON

<u>Leader</u>: The promise is sure: Christ's advent is near, and in Christ we are forgiven for all our sins.

<u>People:</u> As beloved children of God, we know that in Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Thanks be to God!



Glory Be to the Father



God's Word Is Proclaimed

SCRIPTURE LESSON: Luke 1:5-13, 57-80

(NT) pg. 56

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. ⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." ⁶¹They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." ⁶²Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy: 68"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. ⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, 71that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. 72Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us 74that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." 80The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

*HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

No. 153

153 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



We Respond to God's Word

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER

<u>Leader</u>: In anticipation of the coming Messiah, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

God of song, we praise you for all the ways you show up and surprise us, calling us into your loving service for the sake of the world. Inspire us to carry the gospel message as John the Baptist would.

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

<u>Leader</u>: Guide all who strive to bring warring peoples together in peace and love. Guide us into a time of human flourishing. Inspire us to care for one another as you care for us.

People: God of peace and love, in mercy hear our prayer.

<u>Leader</u>: Strengthen all leaders of all faith communities in their call to serve you and all your children. May they inspire your people to proclaim the good news of your love in all they say and do.

People: God of community, in mercy hear our prayer.

<u>Leader</u>: We pray for all those in our lives, named and unnamed, who struggle with physical or emotional challenges. Especially, we lift up: Tavi Haastrup, Rob Paul, Greg Maurer, Bart Maurer, Karen Vornholt, Terri Mullins, Denise Joyce, Bev Poppe, Ann Hudson, Dee Schroer, and Anna Hoelscher. Grant to these and so many others your healing grace.

People: God of wholeness, in mercy hear our prayer.

<u>Leader:</u> Inspire and support all teachers, at every level of education and stage of life, to fill their students with wonder and equip them to think critically about the world around them.

People: God of true wisdom, in mercy hear our prayer.

<u>Leader</u>: We lift our prayers, spoken and unspoken, into your gracious arms, trusting in your love and mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, who taught us to live when he taught us to pray, 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: With Elizabeth and Zechariah, we rejoice in all that God has given to us. Accept, O God, our gifts in response to your love. Accept these gifts of our resources, our time, and our skills, and dedicate them to the service of the world. Amen.

*HYMN

Rejoice, the Lord Is King!

No. 342



*BENEDICTION:

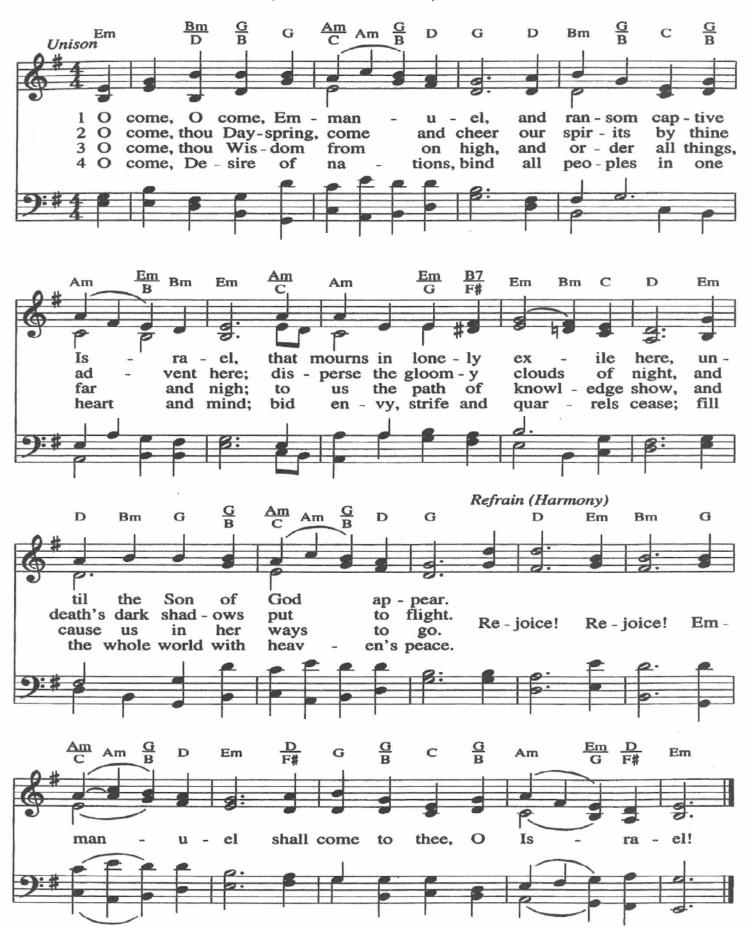
<u>Leader</u>: Let all God's people say:

Alleluia, Amen!

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

No. 154



*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

Celebration of Life for Virginia M. Voress- A celebration of life for Virginia "Gin" Voress will be held on Thursday, December 28th at 11:00am in the sanctuary. Please visit https://gilberghartwigfh.com/obituaries/ for visitation hours.

Altar Flowers are in memory of Loved Ones Family by Dan Nedderman 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 17th | Worship In-Person-91, Online-28

2023 Financial Information as of December 18, 2023

Operating Fund

Endowment Trans \$36,879.96(ytd)

Income \$305,056.04 (ytd)

Expenses \$295,996.14(ytd)

Balance \$ 9,059.90 (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 \$5,205.50

Local Aid

Beg. Balance \$9,977.49

Income \$23,439.24(ytd)

Expenses \$17,482.73(ytd)

Balance \$17,482.73(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 \$24,211.60(ytd)

New Office Hours- Please welcome Jenn Snider as our new administrator! As of December 4th, 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 24th | **Christmas Services-** Tonight we have two worship services lined up. Join us from 5:00-7:00pm for drop-in communion at 5:30, 6:00, 6:30, & 7:00pm. A Candlelight Service will be held at 11:00pm. Please see the back of the bulletin for more details. We look forward to sharing these meaningful moments with you.

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

OTHER NOTEWORTHY INFORMATION

On behalf of the family of Vernon Paul- We would like to express our thanks to all of those who assisted in the services at our father's funeral. Our gratitude goes out to Rev. Locke for the lovely scripture and delivering the homily and Connie O'Neill for the beautiful music at the service and anyone else assisting at the service that we may be missing. We would also like to thank the funeral luncheon committee for organizing the luncheon and anyone who may have brought food. Also thank you to anyone who may have given memorials and for all of the thoughts and prayers during this difficult time for our family. The Vernon Paul Family

Women's Service Group will meet on January 11th at 1p.m. for a soup lunch in the Assembly Room. Following the luncheon, the group will view the film Philomena. All are welcome to join us. Contact Sally Dicke for more 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, Laundry Soap, Body Wash-Adult, Toothpaste-Adult, Shaving Cream, Shampoo, Conditioner, Cotton Balls, Baby Lotion. 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 or 419-305-0584. The St. Paul Prayer Chain has two formats: texting and email. All are welcome.

Calendar-Week of December 24, 2023

Calchual - Week of December 24, 2023		
Sunday	9:00am	Sunday School
-	10:15am	Worship Service
		In Person & via Facebook Live
	5:00-7:00pm	Christmas Eve Worship
	_	Communion offered at 5:30, 6:00,
		6:30, and 7:00pm
	11:00pm	Christmas Eve Candlelight
		Worship Service
Monday		Office Closed - Merry Christmas!
Tuesday		No Blessing Pantry Hours
Wednesday	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Thursday	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry Open
Friday		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.*



<u>Christmas Eve Worship</u> December 24th, **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.



<u>Christmas Eve Worship</u> December 24th, **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!



2023 Poinsettia Memorial and Gifts

A gift for Janice Howell in memory of Andrew Makley & Alivia Fraley & Don Howell by Kay Makley & Ashley Fraley & Family (1 Red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Bill and Cindy Young (1 Red)

In memory of Loved Ones by Roger and Cheryl Barlage (1 Red)

In memory of Carolyn Dicke, Albert & Marie Dicke by Todd Dicke Family (2 Red)

In memory of Ron Hittepole by Marlene Hittepole Family (1 Red)

In memory of Andrea Hittepole by Marlene Hittepole Family (1 Red)

In memory of Robert Wilson by Carol Wilson & Family (1 Red)

- In memory of Paul and Viola Headapohl by David and Kelli Muether & Family (1 White)
- In memory of James and Irene Jarvis by The David Jarvis Family (1 White)
- In memory of Wilbur and Enola Greber and Jim and Tillie Washburn (1 White and 1 Red)
- In memory of Cindy Dicke (1 White and 1 Red)
- In memory of Loved Ones by Dan and Kathy Nedderman (3 Red)
- In memory of Everett and Barbara Schmidt by Sue and Lester Schmackers (1 Red)
- In memory of Greg Bushman and Linda Bushman (1 Red)
- In memory of Becky Quellhorst by Tom Quellhorst (1 White and 1 Red)
- In memory of Loved Ones by Mark and Paula Topp (1 Red)
- In memory of Angela Lynne Bushman and Loved Ones by Dennis Bushman (1 Red)
- In memory of Loved Ones by Burt and Jan Fiser (1 Red)
- In memory of Loved Ones by Cindy Newman (1 Red)
- In memory of Edgar, Vilma, Edward E and Mamie Rump by Bev Plattner (1 Red)
- In memory of Raymon, Anna, Eugene, Richard, and Betty Plattner by Bev Plattner (1 Red)
- In memory of Don R and Rodney Miller and Ralph Plattner by Bev Plattner (1 Red)

- A gift for Dale Schaefer in memory of Jesse and Verona Miller and Verdella Schaefer by Bev Plattner (1 Red)
- In memory of Loved Ones by Allen Bushman Family (1 Red)
- In memory of Mary and Robert Finke, Irene and Paul Jones, and Gregg Thobe by Gary and Staci Jones (2 Red, 1 White)
- In memory of Art and Eileen Ranly and The Meyer Family by Matt and Lynda Ranly & Family (2 White)

Christmas Decorating Fund Donors

The Family of Larry Kuhn and Tyler James Kuhn
Bill and Cindy Young
Tom Quellhorst
James and Diane Gilberg & Family
Dan and Kathy Nedderman
The David Jarvis Family
Gary and Staci Jones
Burt and Jan Fiser
Kay Makley and Ashley Fraley & Family

We would like to express our gratitude to all who have donated to the beautification of our sanctuary by purchasing poinsettias or contributing to the decorating fund. We would also like to remind all who purchased poinsettias that they may be claimed after the 11:00pm Christmas Eve worship service, on the days of December 26th and 27th between the hours of 9:00am-12pm, or after worship service on December 31st. The building will be locked on December 25th and 29th. Thank you!