

January 4, 2021

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

Epiphany Blessings! As we celebrate the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, we bring our own gifts to Jesus—sharing abundantly of ourselves.

We are very aware that the weekly worship packets have not been arriving on time. We have been told that this is due to Covid19 infections at mail processing facilities. You can access the weekly bulletin on the St. Paul webpage: www.stpaulnb.org.

At this point we are scheduled to return to in-person worship on January 24. However, this is a moving target due to increased coronavirus cases. Church Council meets next week to discuss this issue.

You will notice in the financials that we are approximately \$5000 in the red for 2020. Keep in mind that around \$3000 of that was brought into 2020 from 2019. This means that we were only \$2000 behind in giving versus expenses—not bad for a pandemic year! We thank you for your generosity and encourage you to continue to support the many ministries and missions of St. Paul Church in this new year.

Our Church Council slate for 2021 is not yet complete. We still need a Treasurer, a Junior Deacon, and a First Year Trustee. If you feel called to any of these positions, please call the church office, Roland Dicke or Myra Hanenkratt.

We are seeking a volunteer with snow removal equipment who would be available for snow removal on weekdays on the west side of our property and on weekends for our parking lots. Please contact Roland Dicke or Myra Hanenkratt if you are interested.

Again: Thank you for your faithfulness to St. Paul Church!

Grace and Peace,


 Roland Dicke Myra Hanenkratt Becky Erb Strang Dee Schroer
 Council President Council VP Senior Pastor Associate Pastor

MOMENT FOR MISSION: Blessing Pantry-2021 Project of the Year and January Monthly Mission

A number of years ago, a decision was made to alternate the Project of the Year between a St. Paul facility project and a broader church mission project, chosen by the Mission Team. 2021 is the year for the broader mission project. We, the Mission Team, with Council's approval have chosen the Blessing Pantry because it serves many from the surrounding area who do not belong to St. Paul. We see long lines for food on our TV's every day, well, believe it or not, we have the same needs here in New Bremen and surrounding area as in other places. January will kick off this important project to help with the very real needs of area families. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, families utilize the pantry for food and other daily necessities regularly. St. Paul has partnered with West Ohio Food Bank, which allows us to purchase food for as little as .19 cents a pound and this gives us greater purchasing capability to keep the shelves stocked. We are asking members of St. Paul for donations of money as well as items for the Blessing Pantry. We, the Mission Team, will keep you updated on how we are doing through-out the year. Thank all of you for your generosity to the missions of St. Paul.

God Loves a Cheerful Giver! The Mission Team

Financial Information as of December 31, 2020

Operating Fund	Local Aid
Beg. Balance (\$2,974.14)	Beg. Balance \$9,934.05
Giving Income \$16,028.69(weekly)	Income \$19,348.00(YTD)
Endowment Transfers \$37,942.92(ytd)	Expenses \$23,226.89(YTD)
Income \$312,217.23(YTD)	Balance \$6,055.16
Expenses \$314,263.34(YTD)	Bless Pantry Inc. \$20,716.16
Balance (\$5,020.25)	Bless Pantry Ex. \$12,835.01
Building Maint & Property Care	Balance \$7,881.15
Beg. Balance \$83,428.04	Our Church Wider Mission
Income \$17,359.00 (YTD)	Pledge \$30,000.00
Endowment Income \$4,304.33 (YTD)	Income \$435.00(weekly)
Expenses \$34,159.78(YTD)	Income \$24,767.00 (YTD)
Balance \$70,931.59	Project of the Year
	Income \$0.00(weekly)
	Balance \$2,548.00

2020 Year End is not completed, all ending balances are preliminary
 Financial Information as of January 4, 2021 is not yet available.

JANUARY 10, 2021
BAPTISM OF
OUR LORD



Jesus is God's beloved, and so are we.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 1:4-11	The baptism of Jesus
Monday	Genesis 1:1-5	God creates light
Tuesday	Acts 19:1-7	Paul baptizes in Ephesus
Wednesday	Mark 15:33-39	Death of Jesus
Thursday	Ephesians 4:1-6	Unity in the body of Christ
Friday	Galatians 3:19-29	The purpose of the law
Saturday	Psalms 29	The voice of God in the storm
Sunday	John 1:43-51	Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." Mark 1:11 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, we thank you for Jesus, your Beloved Son and our Savior and for claiming us in baptism as your loved children now and always. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God of tender care, as we are given strength from this meal, may we remember with joy that we are your beloved children through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord give you strength and bless you with peace. (Psalm 29:11)



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JANUARY 10, 2021

HYMN OF THE WEEK

You are Mine



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What is a dramatic event you have witnessed or heard about?
- Have you experienced a baptism as a life-changing event? Explain.
- How was Jesus' baptism a life-changing event for the world?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 1:4-11.

Jesus' baptism is marked by dramatic events. Not only did Jesus go out to John in the wilderness, but so did "all the people of Jerusalem" (v. 5). John, who has a strong following acknowledges that Jesus, the one to come after John, is so much more important, that John is not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals. Jesus' own baptizing will bring with it the Holy Spirit, not just the call to repentance, as was the baptism of John. The Holy Spirit will make Jesus' baptism and the Christian baptism different (see Acts 19:1-7). Then, the most dramatic moment happens, the moment that defines Jesus' baptism as a cosmic shattering event: the heavens were torn apart and the Spirit of God came down, appearing like a dove. The tearing apart of the heavens will be matched by the tearing apart of the curtain in the temple at the time of Jesus' death (Mark 15:38). Jesus' baptism is linked with the cosmic shattering event of his death that changes for all time our relationship to God. This is something that we participate in through our own baptisms, another earth-shattering experience filled with love that claims us as God's beloved children. Is being claimed by God in baptism earth shattering to you? Why or why not?

Pray: **God of glory and might, help us to see and believe in your earth-shattering power and love for us and to see that love embrace us in the remembrance of our baptisms. Amen.**

SERVICE

The baptism of Jesus took place using water. Water is essential to life. It is important that rivers, lakes, and oceans stay clean but they can get and have been contaminated by people's actions. What are some things we can do to help keep our waters clean and free of pollution?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The "Baptism of our Lord Sunday" is a time to recall our own baptisms. This week in your home, light a candle, perhaps your own baptismal candle. Dip your fingers into a bowl of water and mark the sign of the cross on your forehead or the foreheads of one another. As you mark the sign of the cross, give this blessing:

Say: **You are God's beloved child.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org



St. Paul United Church of Christ

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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 Senior Pastor

Pastor Dee Associate Pastor

Roland Dicke-Council President

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

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

January 10, 2021

Baptism of Christ Sunday

Installation of Council Members

Worship Leaders

Ministers

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Pastor Dee Schroer

Cheyenne Olt

Dick Hudson

The Congregation

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Accompanist/Vocalist

Organist

PRELUDE

GREETING AND LIGHTING OF CANDLES: As we light the altar and Christ candle you are invited to light a candle or candles at home in preparation for worship.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MOMENT FOR MISSION: Blessing Pantry

WELCOME SONG

No Matter

No Matter

♩=120

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 120 beats per minute. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are: "No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what no mat-ter where you are on the". The second staff continues the lyrics: "jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter". The third staff continues: "who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the". The fourth staff concludes with: "jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-comed by God's grace. grace." There are two endings for the final line: "To verses" and "Last time, Fine".

Chords: F, Dm, Gm7, C, F, F7, Bb, G7, F, Dm, G7, Gm7, C7, C, F, F7, Bb, G7, F, Dm, Gm7, C7, C, F, F.

CALL TO WORSHIP (from The Pattern of our Days by Kathy Galloway; Wild Goose Publications)

Leader: Creature Spirit, wellspring of our lives, as the refreshing rain falls on the just and unjust alike,

People: Refresh us with your mercy, who knows our own injustice.

Leader: As a stream flows steadily on, defying all the odds of stone and water,

People: Flow over every boundary and border that separates us from each other.

Leader: As the waters of baptism washed us and welcomed us,

People: Renew us now in newness of life and unity of love.

Leader: As we were once held in the waters of our mother's womb,

People: Hold us in the power and presence of your abiding love.

Come, Let Us Praise the Lord

9

C $\frac{G}{B}$ C Am $\frac{Cmaj7}{G}$ F $\frac{C}{E}$ $\frac{G7}{D}$ C G

1 Come, let us praise the Lord, with joy our God ac - claim, his
 2 Our God of match-less worth, our King be - yond com - pare, the
 3 In wor - ship bow the knee, our glo - rious God con - fess; the
 4 Come, hear his voice to - day, re - ceive what love im - parts; his

C Am Am7 D $\frac{D}{C}$ $\frac{G}{B}$ C $\frac{G}{B}$ D7 G C F $\frac{Bdim}{D}$

great-ness tell a - broad and bless his sav - ing name. Lift high your
 deep - est bounds of earth, the hills, are in his care. He all de -
 great Cre - a - tor, he, the Lord of Right - eous - ness. He reigns un -
 ho - ly will o - bey and hard - en not your hearts. His ways are

C $\frac{G}{B}$ C $\frac{F}{A}$ $\frac{C}{G}$ F E Am $\frac{Dm}{F}$ $\frac{C}{G}$ G7 C

songs be - fore his throne to whom a - lone all praise be - longs.
 crees, who by his hand pre - pared the land and formed the seas.
 seen: his flock he feeds and gent - ly leads in pas - tures green.
 best; and lead at last, all trou - bles past, to per - fect rest.

WORDS: Timothy Dudley-Smith (1926-); para. Psalm 95
 MUSIC: John Darwall (1731-1789)

DARWALL'S 148th
 6.6.6.4.4.8.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

UNISON CONFESSION OF SIN

Holy and Merciful God, in our time of worship together we experience a connection with you and with fellow believers; we pray for ourselves, for people within our families and within our congregation. We pray also for people in our community and for situations in our world that cry out for your healing touch through ministries of care and compassion. Aware of your presence and confident in your love, we confess what you already know—we have sinned in wandering from your ways, in squandering your gifts, and in disregarding your love. As individuals and as a community we are sorry for any words and actions that have diminished our witness. Help us to live in your light and to walk in your ways. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: God hears the confession of our hearts and lips. Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven all our sins, and by the Holy Spirit we are empowered for new life.

People: We believe the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*HALLELUJAH!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl Hal - le -

lu - jahl Hal - le - lu - jahl

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff in the key of D major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four lines of music. The first line is the main melody with lyrics 'Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl'. The second line is a piano accompaniment with lyrics 'Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl' and includes chord markings: C, Am7, and D7. The third line is a piano accompaniment with lyrics 'Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl Hal - le -' and includes chord markings: C, D, G, D, and Em. The fourth line is a piano accompaniment with lyrics 'lu - jahl Hal - le - lu - jahl'.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: Once upon a time there was a young boy with a very bad temper. The boy's father wanted to teach him a lesson, so he gave his son a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper he must hammer a nail into their wooden fence.

On the first day, the little boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. He was really mad!

Over the course of the next few weeks, the boy began to control his anger, so the number of nails that were hammered into the fence dramatically decreased. It wasn't long before the boy discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Then, the day finally came when the boy didn't lose his temper, even once. He was so proud of himself; he couldn't wait to tell his father.

Pleased, his father suggested that his son now pull out one nail for each day that he could hold his temper. Several weeks went by and the day finally came when the young boy was able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

Very gently, the father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. The father said, "You have done very well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same."

The boy listened carefully as his father continued to speak: "When you say things in anger, they leave permanent scars just like these holes on the fence. And no matter how many times you say you're sorry, the wounds will still be there."

You must understand this, my beloved let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰ for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. (James 1:19-20)

Spirit, Working in Creation

G D7/A G/B Em C6 D G G/B Am7 D G/B Em D7/A D7 G

1 Spir - it, work - ing in cre - a - tion, bring - ing or - der out of strife:
 2 Spir - it, o - ver - shad - ow - ing Ma - ry as the Christ - child in her grew:
 3 Spir - it, driv - ing to the des - ert e - ven God's A - noint - ed One:
 4 Spir - it, wind and flame, em - power - ing fear - less wit - ness to the lost:

G D7/A G/B Em C6 D G G/B Am7 D G/B Em D7/A D7 G

come a - round God's gath - ered peo - ple, giv - ing har - mo - ny and life.
 come, so that the Christ with - in us may to - day be born a - new.
 come to us in trial and test - ing that God's will in us be done.
 come, u - nite, re - new your won - ders as of a new Pen - te - cost!"

Em Dm C Bm/D Am/E E Am D D/C G/B Em D/F# G A7 D

Spir - it, speak - ing through the proph - ets so the voice of God was heard:
 Spir - it, com - ing from the Fa - ther as a dove up - on our Lord:
 Spir - it, breath - ed on the dis - ci - ples, giv - ing peace where there was fear:
 Praise and glo - ry, Ho - ly Spir - it, for your love on us out - poured,

G D7/A G/B Em C6 D G G/B Am7 D G/B Em D7/A D7 G

come, in - spire, a - lert your peo - ple to this day's pro - phet - ic word.
 come up - on your fa - vored peo - ple, and your bless - ings be out - poured.
 come a - mong us, touch us, send us, mak - ing Je - sus' pres - ence near.
 giv - ing hon - or to the Fa - ther and pro - claim - ing Je - sus "Lord."

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Worshipping Together

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Drew Wray, Macie Barlage, Deb Lear, Jan Dammeyer, and Pastor Dee Schroer.

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

God of grace and glory, you call us with your voice of flame and wind and water to be your people, faithful and courageous. As your beloved Son embraced his mission in the waters of baptism, inspire us with the fire of your Spirit to join in his transforming work.

Creator God, your creation story is told again and again with each person's baptism. Your invitation to be part of the body of Christ is offered anew at each baptism. Your claim on your children, that they are your beloved, is told at each baptism. We thank you for the gift of grace in baptism. We thank you for the gift of belonging to the Body of Christ in baptism.

Spark our memories of our baptism and your claim on our life. Spark our desires to be part of the body of Christ.

Lord our world is angry, sad and confused with the wars in distant nations, gang fights in our cities, violence and anger in our homes, the coronavirus ravaging our nation and world. We see the damage to your beautiful creation. We see the destruction by natural disasters. And we wonder how long? We feel unsafe and insecure.

Lord in these times, spark us to remember our baptism. Spark us to remember that it is in you that we are truly safe, truly secure. Remind us that forever and ever we belong to you.

Holy God, we know our baptismal vows call us to compassion and mercy on behalf of those in need. We offer our prayers for the church and the world.

We offer prayers for our community and neighboring villages.

We offer prayers for our homes and our neighborhoods.

We offer prayers of peace, healing and hope in an uncertain world.

Gentle God, may your Spirit move over the face of the waters of our lives. Hear us now as we lift up to you our prayers. SILENCE

Lord God, you revealed your Son in the waters of the Jordan and anointed him with the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim good news to all people. For this we thank you and praise you.

All of this we pray in the name of Jesus who taught us to pray...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Psalm 51:6-17

(NRSV)

*You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.*

*⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

*⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.*

*⁹ Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*

*¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.*

*¹¹ Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.*

*¹² Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.*

*¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.*

*¹⁴ Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.*

*¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*

*¹⁶ For you have no delight in sacrifice;
if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.*

*¹⁷ The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

*‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.*

*⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;*

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to

untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹ But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰ added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

²¹ Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, ²² and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

RESPONSE

Leader: The word of God for the people of God!

People: God is still speaking! Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Today is Baptism of Jesus Sunday—the Sunday we celebrate the baptism of Christ and the gift of our own baptisms. With that in mind, I share with you a story Peg and Dan Chamberlin tucked in their Christmas card to our family years ago:

Three buildings in town were overrun by squirrels—the town hall, the hardware store, and the church. The town hall brought in some cats. But after they tore up all the files, the mayor got rid of the predators, and soon the squirrels were back. The hardware store humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free outside town. But three days later, the squirrels climbed back in. Only the church came up with an effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and made them members. Now, the church only sees the squirrels on Christmas and Easter!

We laugh, but we are also a bit chilled by the painful realities of discipleship and ministry in mainline Protestant churches. For indeed, church membership and even Christianity itself is far too often seen and lived as a hobby rather than as a radical call to new life in Christ. We

baptize our young, we confirm our youth, we marry and bury, but for many folk regular worship, daily prayer, regular mission outreach, generous stewardship and daily discipleship are not even on life's radar screens.

Today's Gospel lesson tells us it doesn't need to be that way. In fact, when we dig deeply into today's particular story, we find ourselves surprised by what we do NOT hear. If I were to ask you, "Who baptized Jesus?", my guess is that most of you would answer, "John the Baptist."

If we look carefully at the Gospel of Luke, we hear about John the Baptist baptizing with water and prophetically calling out the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. The story then jumps PAST Jesus' actual baptism and we hear, *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized.*

Do you see what is missing? The Gospel of Luke tells nothing about Jesus going down into and coming up out of the water. We can assume John did the baptizing, since that is what we hear in the other gospels, but somehow it seems that the writer of Luke isn't concerned with that detail. What IS given prominence is what happened AFTER Jesus was baptized. What is important is NOT the event of Jesus' baptism, but how that baptism shaped the rest of his life.

After the Holy Spirit descended—we heard today—in the bodily form like a dove—there came a voice from heaven, "*You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.*" In Luke's account, there is no indication that anyone but Jesus heard the voice of God speaking from the heavens above. In the moment of baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, calling him God's beloved.

Throughout the Gospel of Luke and its sister book the Acts of the Apostles, we see the Holy Spirit pouring upon Jesus and later in Acts the pouring upon believers soon after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven. The unnamed writer of Luke and Acts clearly wanted believers to know the power of the Holy Spirit in both Jesus' life and their own lives.

And what of us? How can we transform our Sunday-morning Christianity to an on-fire Spirit-filled transformative faith? The answer is both simple and profound: through service in the name of Jesus. By finding our life's purpose through serving others.

Indeed, baptism is the beginning of our call to ministry as Christians. And perhaps here is the secret—when we emerge from the waters and

begin to do ministry (to bind up the brokenhearted, to support the weak, to help the afflicted), we place ourselves in the unique position to watch the heavens open up and a voice say,

“This is my son/This is my daughter with whom I am well pleased.”

So how do we even begin to figure out what God is calling us to do? How do we discern what is our call/ministry? Rev. Peter Bankson of the Seekers Church in Washington DC has some answers. *When you discover that ministry is the joy that keeps you running long after your lungs and legs are ready to quit, then I would say that is a “call.” If it is good news to others and you are willing to do it for their sake, maybe that is “ministry.” Moreover, if it is good news to others but a burden to you, I would call it a “chore.”*

Not a bad description: If your task brings you joy, it is a calling. If it brings good news to others and you are ready to share that good news, it is ministry. If your task is a burden, it becomes merely a chore.

In this new year, in this new season, in this new life in which we emerge from the waters: think for a moment—what brings you joy? What energizes you? What makes you willing to go that extra mile? As baptized, beloved children of God, the very foundation of our lives is anchored in finding and living out our calling. Perhaps it is working with children. Perhaps your calling is prayer. Perhaps it is farming—providing food for others. Perhaps your call is to ease suffering. Perhaps your call is to make music. I cannot tell you what God is calling you to do and be, but my suspicion is you KNOW in the depths of your soul that which brings you joy.

Once you have discovered that which brings you joy: do it! Do it again and again and again. Share that joy with others. And when you do, God’s light will shine in you for all the world to see.

Here is the good news for us today, because we are baptized into the Body of Christ, we are invited to prayerfully consider not only God’s call to us as individuals, but also God’s call to us as a congregation. Who and what is God calling St. Paul United Church of Christ to be? What joyful ministry can we share with the community? What is the good news that we alone can offer to a hurting world?

We are a congregation baptized for mission beyond these walls. We are a congregation of radical hospitality—welcoming all who come to us.

We are a congregation with a passion for children and youth—growing disciples of Christ in all ages. Friends, we are all these and much, much more. For when our joyful calls collide and combine with one another's, God makes our congregation into a new creation, a light to the nations, the salt of the earth.

The heavens have been ripped wide open. God is speaking (and is still speaking) to us. Let us open our ears and our hearts to God's call, God's grace, and God's love. Amen.

ORDER FOR AFFIRMATION OF MINISTRY (Installation of Lay Leaders) INTRODUCTION

Leader: Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby a 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.

Leader: 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 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.

Roland Dicke

President

Myra Hanenkratt

Vice President

Amy Opperman

Recording Secretary

Open Position

Treasurer

Dr. Jeff Paul

Sr. Elder

Diane Gilberg

Jr. Elder

Brice Schmitmeyer

Sr. Deacon

Open Position

Jr. Deacon

Tom Brandewie

3rd Year Trustee

Kirk Dicke

2nd Year Trustee

Open Position

1st Year 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.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: The first words of the Bible are about God's own generosity. God gave us the gifts of a beautiful creation, our home, the good green earth, and the animals that live here with us. On this winter morning, we come together to thank God and to offer our gifts so that the ministry of this church will continue to grow and be a blessing to the world. Let us give generously and joyfully.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

O God, day by day we experience your generous provision. We give in response to your giving, and we do this with thankful hearts. May this offering and all our thoughts and actions touch the lives of others with your love. Amen.

For the Healing of the Nations 621

B \flat $\frac{B\flat}{D}$ B \flat $\frac{B\flat}{F}$ $\frac{F}{E\flat}$ $\frac{B\flat}{D}$ E \flat $\frac{B\flat}{D}$ Gm $\frac{F}{A}$ F7 B \flat

1 For the heal-ing of the na-tions, Lord, we pray with one ac-cord,
 2 Lead your peo-ple in-to free-dom, from de-spair your world re-lease,
 3 All that kills a-bun-dant liv-ing, let it from the earth be banned:
 4 You, Cre-a-tor-God, have writ-ten your great name on hu-man-kind;

B \flat $\frac{B\flat}{F}$ $\frac{B\flat}{D}$ B \flat *Adim* $\frac{Gm}{C}$ $\frac{Gm}{D}$ D Gm D $\frac{Gm}{B\flat}$ Gm $\frac{F}{C}$ C7 F

for a just and e-qual shar-ing of the things that earth af-fords.
 that, re-deemed from war and ha-tred, all may come and go in peace.
 pride of sta-tus, race, or school-ing, dog-mas that ob-scure your plan.
 for our grow-ing in your like-ness, bring the life of Christ to mind;

F B \flat B \flat 9 E \flat Cm Dm $\frac{Cm}{E\flat}$ Gm F sus F7 B \flat

To a life of love in ac-tion help us rise and pledge our word.
 Show us how, through care and good-ness, fear will die and hope in-crease.
 In our com-mon quest for jus-tice may we hal-low life's brief span.
 that by our re-sponse and serv-ice earth its des-ti-ny may find.

BENEDICTION: You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine that others may see the good things you do and glorify God. God is with us now and always, go in peace.

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *Pass the Love*

Pass the Love

♩=95

F Gm7 F Gm7 F/A F/Bb Gm9 C7

Love our God, ev - 'ry day, praise with joy go-ing on your way.

F Gm7 F Gm7 F/A F/Bb Gm9 G7 C

Pass it on, t'all you meet, ev - 'ry day in— ev - 'ry way.

Fmaj7 Dm F/G F/C

Love our Ho - ly God. Pray with hope each day.

Am7 Dm7 Gm7 F/C C7 F

Bless the Ho - ly Name. Praise our— God.

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: In Christ, we are a new creation. Let us pass the peace of Christ with each other.

You are invited to pass the peace of Christ with others in your household. If you are at home alone, we encourage you to write a note, call a friend and pass Christ's peace in creative ways this week.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are given in memory of Loved Ones by the Allen Bushman Family.

Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions Avg.-134, December 27-Sunday Worship-350, Sunday School-140, Christmas Eve Open House-73 in person, 394 online, Christmas Eve Candlelight Service-227 online.

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

Zoom Bible Study-join us Thursday's at 6:30pm. Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on or logging onto:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88640093949?pwd=ZllqSDBpZzdZi9LT0d6SThwbltZz09> **Meeting ID: 886 4009 3949** **Passcode: 344973**

*If you would like an email version of this to make logging on easier, simply email Pastor Becky: berbstrang@stpaulnb.org

January Book Club-All are welcome to join St. Paul Church's January Book Club set for Sunday, January 24 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom. We will discuss Gail Tsukiyama's book *Women of the Silk*. Copies of the book can be picked up at the church office or you can contact the church office if you need a copy sent or delivered to you. All are welcome. Zoom information: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89039130630?pwd=akg3STIJbXRFWE9CSXE5M3hjZXBrUT09> **Meeting ID: 890 3913 0630** **Passcode: 744081**

*If you would like an email version of this to make logging on easier, simply email Pastor Becky: berbstrang@stpaulnb.org

Sunday January 10 and 17-Sunday School will be via Facebook Live beginning at 9:00am. **Worship**-will be via Facebook Live at 10:15am. **Sunday January 24 and 31-Sunday School** will be in person and via Facebook Live at 9:00am. **Worship** will be in person and via Facebook Live at 10:15am.

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.

2021 Altar Flower Chart has been posted in the Narthex. To sign up for the date(s) you would like. Please call the church office Monday-Friday to sign up. Thank you. **January dates still open the 24th & 31st. February open dates the 7th, 21st & 28th.**

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

Blessing Pantry-is located in the North Hallway and accessible by the North door 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, Napkins, Laundry Detergent, Dish Soap, Razors, Shaving Cream, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Diapers (size 1, 4, 5 & 6), Baby Wipes, Baby Shampoo, Shampoo, Conditioner, Bath/Hand Soap, Hand & Body Lotion, Tampons & Panty Liners, Cleaning Supplies, Storage Bags, Garbage Bags and Pet Food. **Thank you!** There is a metal can outside the East Educational Building door for donations.

January/February Upper Rooms-have arrived! They are available at the East entrance to the education building. Or please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

E-Giving @ St. Paul **3 Different Ways to Give**

Online – Make a donation on our website: stpaulnb.org

Give+ App – Search “Give Plus Church” in your App store and find St. Paul to Get Started!

Text – Make a donation to our Number: 833-308-0048
St. Paul New “Text to Give” #(# changed as of 10/9/19)

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.
Thank you for donating \$ (amount)! Text repeat to make this recurring or refund to cancel this donation.