

St. Paul United Church of Christ 119 North Franklin Street New Bremen, Ohio 45869 Phone (419-629-2502), Fax (419-629-3207) Email <u>stpaulnb@nktelco.net</u> or <u>stpaulnb@gmail.com</u> Visit our website at <u>https://stpaulnb.org</u> Rev. Becky Senior Pastor Pastor Dee Associate Pastor Jeff Quellhorst-Council President

May 10, 2020 Fifth Sunday of Easter Mother's Day

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES (please light a candle(s) at home in preparation of worship)

WELCOME

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

WELCOME SONG

No Matter

No Matter



CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: This is the day God has made, the day to rejoice and give thanks.

People: For Jesus has been raised from the dead, and lives as an everyday presence in our midst.

Leader: This is the day that God has made, the day to remember God's faithfulness through the ages.

People: To hear God's challenge and attend to God's dream for the future.

Leader: God calls us to live in the vision, to share the ministry and mission of Christ.

People: Let us worship with praise, let us serve God with resolve!

HYMN OF PRAISE Crown Him with Many Crowns

ASCENSION

317 Crown Him with Many Crowns



WORDS: Matthew Bridges (1800-1894) and Godfrey Thring (1823-1903) MUSIC: George J. Elvey (1816-1893) INVOCATION (in unison) (based on Acts 17:22-31) Lord God of heaven and earth, Creator of our world, and everything in it, yet as close to us as our own breath—holy is Your name.

In You we live and move and have our being; we are Your own children, the work of Your hands.

We pray that Your Holy Spirit would move among us as we worship, opening our eyes to Your presence, opening our ears to Your Word.

Receive the worship of our hearts and minds and bodies; may it be a pleasing offering to You.

We pray in the name of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose death and resurrection we find life. Amen.



lu-jaht Hal-le-lu-jaht

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: Recognition Of High School Graduates

Prayer for the Class of 2020 by Maren Tirabassi

God, we give thanks for those who have run the race and finished the ... courses, for those approaching the end of high school or college, apprenticeship or graduate programs and especially for this year's class for whom everything has changed and they feel short-changed.

We pray for those who are missing the last year of spring sports or musicals, celebrated acceptances, whispered rejections, the senior prom, dinner, baccalaureate, walking the stage, flipping the tassel, tossing the cap, perhaps in front of guests even more proud to witness an achievement they did not have ... and so many graduation parties.

We pray for those for whom losing a job that is not deemed essential has changed the future completely, and for those for whom the most important part of any of this year was sharing it in-person with friends, (in spite of jokes about their phones).

We rejoice at the way they make a lifeline from those phones, offering mutual support in hard times, and for ingenious distance learning, amazing teachers offering high quality education, provisions of laptops and hotspots, and for the creativity of virtual ceremonies, yes, even Minecraft, the possibilities for re-scheduled graduations, and the sweet inventiveness of family and friends to find special ways to say -- well done, to the class of the year of the bubble who sparkle with a rainbow all their own. Amen

PRAYER HYMN When Hand Can No More Reach and Hold

When hands can no more reach and hold



TEXT: Charles Spence Freeman, 2020 MUSIC: Suggested tune RESIGNATION, USA folk melody, Lewis's *Beauties of Harmony*, 1828 (CMD) PASTORAL PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER. (adapted from Prayer For a Pandemic. Author unknown)

Holy God, as we gather in our separate homes to worship together, may we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake. SILENCE

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable. SILENCE

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent. SILENCE

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children remember those who have no options. SILENCE

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go. SILENCE

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all. SILENCE

May we who have settled in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home. SILENCE

As fear grips our country, O God, let us choose love. SILENCE

As fear grips our hearts, O God, let us lift up our brothers and sisters who are sick. SILENCE

God of Grace and God of Glory, hear us now as we lift up our prayers to you. And we humbly ask you to silence our busy hearts and minds so that we can hear your still small voice for us this day. SILENCE

Gentle One, during this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us find ways to be the loving embrace of our God to our neighbors

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. ANTHEM

How Great Thou Art

(YouTube.com; search Elvis How Great Thou Art 1972) O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy power through-out the universe displayed.

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim, "My God, how great thou art."

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: how great thou art, how great thou art!

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Acts 18:1-4 (from New Revised Standard Version)

After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ² There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³ and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. ⁴ Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

QUESTIONS FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT LESSON:

- 1. What words or phrases caught your attention in this text?
- 2. What might God be saying to you in this passage?
- 3. What might God be saying to our community in this passage?
- 4. What is the good news of Acts 18:1-4?

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

(from Eugene Peterson's <u>The Message</u>)

I have a serious concern to bring up with you, my friends, using the authority of Jesus, our Master. I'll put it as urgently as I can:

You *must* get along with each other. You must learn to be considerate of one another, cultivating a life in common.

¹¹⁻¹² I bring this up because some from Chloe's family brought a most disturbing report to my attention—that you're fighting among yourselves! I'll tell you exactly what I was told: You're all picking sides, going around saying, "I'm on Paul's side," or "I'm for Apollos," or "Peter is my man," or "I'm in the Messiah group."

¹³⁻¹⁶ I ask you, "Has the Messiah been chopped up in little pieces so we can each have a relic all our own? Was Paul crucified for you? Was a single one of you baptized in Paul's name?" I was not involved with any of your baptisms—except for Crispus and Gaius—and on getting this report, I'm sure glad I wasn't. At least no one can go around saying he was baptized in my name. (Come to think of it, I also baptized Stephanas's family, but as far as I can recall, that's it.)

¹⁷ God didn't send me out to collect a following for myself, but to preach the Message of what he has done, collecting a following for him. And he didn't send me to do it with a lot of fancy rhetoric of my own, lest the powerful action at the center—Christ on the Cross—be trivialized into mere words.

¹⁸⁻²¹ The Message that points to Christ on the Cross seems like sheer silliness to those hellbent on destruction, but for those on the way of salvation it makes perfect sense. This is the way God works, and most powerfully as it turns out. It's written,

I'll turn conventional wisdom on its head,

I'll expose so-called experts as crackpots.

So where can you find someone truly wise, truly educated, truly intelligent in this day and age? Hasn't God exposed it all as pretentious nonsense? Since the world in all its fancy wisdom never had a clue when it came to knowing God, God in his wisdom took delight in using what the world considered dumb—*preaching*, of all things!—to bring those who trust him into the way of salvation.

RESPONSE:

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

QUESTIONS FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT READING:

1. What words or phrases captured your imagination in this text?

2. What might God be saying to you in this passage?

3. What might God be saying to our community in this passage?

4. What is the good news of 1 Corinthians 1:10-18?

SERMON

Pastor Dee Schroer

Because of the events of the last several weeks - of course the first word that popped out at me as I read today's scripture lessons was divisions.

In this time when we are practicing isolation and social distancing, when we are being "forced" in a sense to stay away from others even those we love the most, parents, grandchildren, elderly family members and beloved neighbors and coworkers.

The thought of causing divisions amongst ourselves is pretty absurd!!!

So I ask you while we are in this time of uncertainty and upheaval to think about how your faith is being affected by all of this? Has your faith come into play as a resource that you are drawing upon to guide you through the many life changes brought about by this modern day pandemic?

We have all used this time to find new ways to entertain ourselves and keep ourselves busy, but have you taken it as a time to quiet your mind and listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

Are you blaming God for this? Are you questioning why God would allow this to happen? Are you questioning what God is trying to tell the world, is there a message for us all, is there a message in this for each one of us individually???

Are you finding new meaning in Jesus' life, death and resurrection in this Easter season?

Where are you finding comfort? Hope? Strength? Answers?

Who or what are you following to get through the uncertainness of this time of extreme and radical change?

And as for divisions, can you see how easy it is to lose sight of the common threads of our faith as times get tough and we begin to look to other people, places and things to sum up our answers for us.

Today's reading from Acts is just a little background of the time Paul spent in Corinth. He joined up with fellow tentmakers Priscilla and Aquila who converted from Judaism to following the message and teachings of Christ.

Paul was a well-educated man who attained the viable skill of tent making to help support himself as he set about his missionary work of sharing the message of Jesus.

Paul was passionate about his missionary work, he was bold, he was intentional, and he lived his faith fully by accepting God's love, forgiveness, grace and mercy. He allowed himself to be transformed by his encounter with Jesus and as a result Paul was able to see how we are to take these inner spiritual gifts, turn them around and use them to minister to others in the world around us!

(If one of your children has been in Splash the last 2 or 3 years ask them about Paul, who used to be known as Saul, and see what they remember about his conversion on the road to Damascus. See what they remember about his travels, his mission, his letters and writings. Ask them why his testimony might be more believable to the people he was preaching to. Ask them what Paul (known then as Saul) was headed to Damascus to do.) You can find the story of Paul's conversion in Acts 9: 1-31.

The Holy Spirit led Paul to minister in many different places. He left new "churches" or maybe it is more accurate for that time period to describe them as groups who "followed Christ".

Do you remember Reverend Becky's description of these "new believers" from last week? She described them as a "mixed bag: Jews and Gentiles, women and men, wealthy and poor". Is it any wonder that eventually as life went on and times got tough the diversity of these new believers got in the way of their faith? Not only the diversity of their personal religious backgrounds, gender or social class- but what about their personal faith experiences, gifts and beliefs?

Think on this as we ponder the second scripture lesson for today from 1 Corinthians 1:10-18. Paul is writing to the followers of Christ that

he left in Corinth. He has gotten word that they were riddled with strife and divisions in their beliefs. They have taken to following different leaders and teachers instead of keeping their hearts and minds focused on the messages of Christ.

Do you see where I am going with this?

We, not only as a diverse community, state or nation but a WORLD that has been turned upside down by a global pandemic, we are living NOW in a serious time of divisions! There are so many sides to be taken-religiously, politically, medically, financially, personally. I am seeing serious divisions brought about by fear.

It seems that many are focusing in more on the divisions and broadcasting the fear associated with uncertain times instead of focusing in on the peace, gentleness and the dealing with others in love and grace as Jesus life, death and resurrection should have taught us.

You see I do not view the bible as an outdated, prehistoric book of wishful thinking. I see it as a reference book of many different scenarios that will play themselves out over and over in our lives. Although it may not be the exact same story, the underlying messages are the same.

As Paul is calling his brothers and sisters in Christ to be united in their common purpose for Christ, he is also speaking to us in our time of growing division to remember to love one another, with the same unconditional love, unending grace and compassionate mercy that God has extended to each and every one of us.

Paul is calling us to dig deeper than the surface issues and the people issues. We are to get back to the real underlying message that Jesus brought into this broken world. The messages, teachings and the stories that point us back to the unity and purpose of being good stewards to all people, good stewards of God's world, good stewards of God's gifts, and good stewards of all that God calls us to do and be in our lives.

So I ask you to ponder just a few more questions-

- What is the message about the cross that is clinging to your spirit this Easter season?
- How will you let it transform you, your faith and your current situation?

 How can you create and uphold Christian unity in the midst of your current situation?

Be Blessed- Be Healthy-Be Open to the Holy Spirit moving around you, Be fully aware of God's love for you no matter what your circumstances and share Christ's Mission in the world however and whenever the Spirit moves you! Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Each week, when you give your tithe/your offering to God, you are making a spiritual gift of thanksgiving for all God has given to you. It is an act of graciousness, of appreciation for God's work throughout our daily lives. We are invited to be generous for we are returning to God a portion of what God has given us. You are encouraged to give your offering through online giving or by sending to St. Paul your offering in the envelope found in this week's worship packet.

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 (unison)

We praise you, God of love, for your generosity in our lives and the life of the church. Reclaim these gifts you have shared with us to enact your love in words of grace, in acts of healing, forgiveness and peace. Send us out into your world to love as your love, to weep as you weep, to give and to receive your vision of abundance for a world in need of sharing Amen.

HYMN

They'll Know We Are Christians



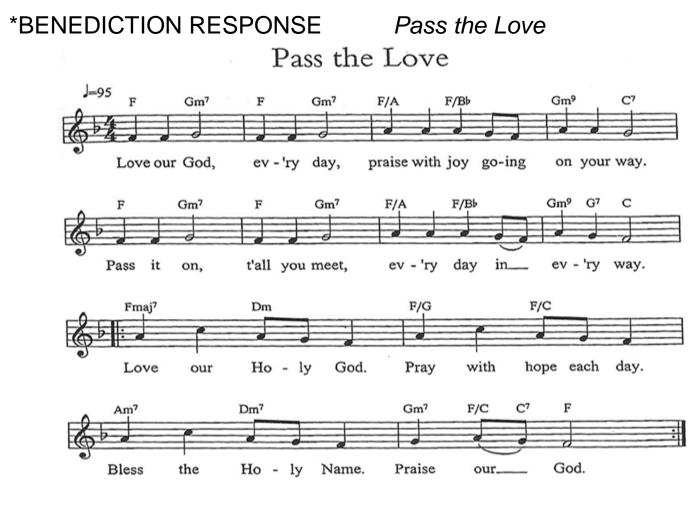
WORDS and MUSIC: Peter Scholtes (1938-); para. John 13:35 Words and Music © 1966, 1967 F.E.L. Publications. Assigned 1991 Lorenz Publishing Company BENEDICTION (by Rev. Elizabeth Dilley)

Go now in peace, for Christ has called you to live in peace among your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Go now in courage, for Christ has called you from the places of your life to be agents of redemption and partners in healing.

Go now in joy and thanksgiving, for Christ is our light!

Go now as one body, to love and serve God as you love and serve the world!



PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST Leader: The peace of Christ be with you. **People: And also with you.**

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

This week's Altar Flowers were to be given in loving memory of Linda Bushman by the Allen Bushman Family.

Blessing Pantry-is open 10am-noon and 1pm-3pm Monday-Friday and 5:30pm-7:30pm Tuesday's. All Donations Welcome-Thank you! We have placed a metal can outside the East Educational Building door for donations.

Building Entrance-St. Paul is accessible by the East Educational Building door, Monday-Friday 10:00am-Noon and 1:00pm-3:00pm. Please ring the doorbell, wait outside the doors so staff may assist you. We are currently taking everyone's temperature asking you to sanitize hands and remove shoes. Thank you!

Mailbox-We have installed 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!

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

May/June Upper Rooms-have arrived! Please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

Flat Jesus Adventures- During Holy Humor Worship on April 19, Pastor Becky introduced Flat Jesus during the Children's Moment.

Taking a page from the Flat Stanley childhood book, you should have received in your worship packet that week, Flat Jesus—who needs to be colored and decorated and ready for adventures in your home.

Then, each weekday during our 11:30am Facebook Live devotions, your family will receive new instructions on what you and Jesus can do together that day. We encourage you to take pictures and put them on Facebook or text pictures to Pastors Becky or Dee.

Upcoming Flat Jesus Adventures:

- May 11 Take a picture of you and Flat Jesus doing an art project.
- May 12 Take a picture of Flat Jesus helping you clean the house.
- May 13 Take a picture of Flat Jesus helping you plant your garden.
- May 14 Take a picture of Flat Jesus saying grace with you at a meal.
- May 15 Take a silly picture of you and Flat Jesus.

If you need more copies of Flat Jesus, contact Pastors Dee or Becky at the church office.

Thursday Evening Vespers-One of the most difficult parts of the Covid19 pandemic is our inability to gather as a congregation. Yes, many of us log onto Facebook for weekly worship and daily devotions, but the interactions with each other is limited. Thursday's at 6:30pm, Pastors Dee and Becky will host Thursday Evening Vespers. Vespers are traditionally an evening prayer service. We plan to gather via the online site called Zoom. To join the Zoom meeting, you can click on or log onto this website: <u>https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78283243697?pwd=cTFzYVIPWjZRZ0dEQU</u> FDT015TIIjUT09 Once you are logged on, you will need the following: **Meeting ID: 782 8324 3697**

Password: 2mSAg1

Currently, Pastor Becky has this time slot reserved on Zoom through Thursday, June 18. The plan is for us to check in with one another, hear scripture, and pray together each week. Any questions? Contact Pastor Becky

New Member Class-Pandemics aside, St. Paul Church is growing. We have a good-sized group of people who have expressed interest in becoming members of St. Paul United Church of Christ. We will have a New Member Orientation session via Zoom on Saturday, May 16 at 10:00am. You can join the New Member Orientation by clicking/logging on to:

https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74474515189?pwd=UmNwMlh2S3lvdS95T0 hJcFhhc2dmZz09

Once you are logged on, you will need the following: Meeting ID: 744 7451 5189 Password: 9h8uAx If St. Paul has become your spiritual home, you are invited to join this Zoom session to learn more about us. All are welcome!

Jigsaw Puzzle Swap-At home doing jigsaw puzzles? Wanting some new puzzles for the coming weeks? Pastors Dee and Becky are willing to coordinate a jigsaw puzzle swap. If you have used puzzles you'd like to loan out OR if you would like to borrow a puzzle, please contact Pastor Becky: Phone:419-629-2502

Women's Service Group: Due to the COVID-19 we've decided to cancel our meeting which was originally set for May 14th. We will try to continue in September. Stay home, stay safe and stay healthy. May God bless all of you and your families.

United Church Of Christ Disaster Relief-May's Monthly Mission

Throughout the month of May, our designated monthly mission will go toward disaster relief efforts within our denomination.

In 2005, immediately following Hurricane Katrina, the UCC Disaster Relief Team sent Pastor Becky to Houston, Texas to coordinate relief efforts among the area UCC churches as busloads of folk from New Orleans were arriving daily. After three weeks in Houston, Becky wrote a rough draft job description for the person who would ultimately be hired fulltime to coordinate relief efforts in Houston and New Orleans.

Wherever natural disaster strikes, the United Church of Christ is present—offering immediate assistance as well as the long term work of rebuilding.

Your generous giving to May's monthly mission will ensure that those whose lives are impacted by disasters will have shelter, food, and hope.

E-Giving @ St. Paul <u>3 Different Ways to Give</u>

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 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.

