



**YOUR MIND
WILL ALWAYS
BELIEVE
EVERYTHING
YOU TELL
IT. FEED
IT HOPE.
FEED IT
TRUTH. FEED
IT WITH LOVE.**

natural life
give love laugh

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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Rev. Becky Senior Pastor

Pastor Dee Associate Pastor

Jeff Quellhorst-Council President

May 17, 2020

Sixth Sunday of Easter

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

WELCOME

This is the house of the Lord, and all are welcome to enter and praise our loving Creator. May God's love fill you with kindness, mercy and joy.

WELCOME SONG

No Matter

No Matter

$\text{♩} = 120$

No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the
jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter
who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the
jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-comed by God's grace. grace.

To verses | Last time, Fine

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: People of God, come follow the way of Christ Jesus!

People: We want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

Leader: People of God, come seek the truth of Christ Jesus!

People: We desire to live lives that reflect the love and mercy of our God.

Leader: People of God, come embrace the life of Christ Jesus!

People: Jesus is our way, our truth, and life! We live our lives in Him!

HYMN OF PRAISE

Every Morning Is Easter Morning

Every Morning Is Easter Morning

Words and Music by
Richard Kinsey Avery
and Donald Stuart Marsh

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (Bb and F). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

System 1: Chords: Bb, F7, Bb. Lyrics: Ev - 'ry morn - ing is Eas - ter morn - ing from now on!

System 2: Chords: Cm, F7. Lyrics: Ev - 'ry day's res - ur - rec - tion day, the past is o - ver and gone! (Last time to Coda)

System 3: Chords: Ebmaj7, Dm, Cm7, F7. Lyrics:
1. Good - bye guilt, good-bye fear, good rid-dance! Hel - lo Lord, hel - lo sun!
2. Dai - ly news is so bad it seems the Good News sel - dom gets heard.
3. Yes - ter - day I was bored and lone - ly; But to - day look and see!

System 4: Chords: Bb, Gm7. Lyrics:
I am one of the Eas - ter peo - ple!
Get it straight from the Eas - ter peo - ple!
I be - long to the Eas - ter peo - ple!

15 C^9 F^7 F^7 D.C. al Coda

My new life has be - gun! me!
 God's in charge! Spread the word!
 Life's ex - cit - ing to

18 \oplus Coda $B\flat$ F^7 $B\flat$ F^7

Ev - 'ry morn - ing is Eas - ter morn - ing, ev - 'ry morn - ing is Eas - ter morn - ing,

22 $B\flat$ F^7

ev - 'ry morn - ing is Eas - ter morn - ing,

24 Cm F^7 $B\flat$

from now on!

SERVICE OF CONFESSION

Leader: God has come to us in Christ, but often we live as if that makes no difference. Let us confess our sin before God and one another.

People: O God, we confess that we have lost our way. We have not followed in your footsteps; we have not helped our sisters and brothers find your path. Forgive us our distractions and set our feet on your path again. Empowered by your grace, direct us as we seek to follow you once again, walking in your truth and bringing to light your life. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Leader: Take heart: God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life. Our sins are forgiven. Let us forgive one another and give ourselves to one another in the joyful community of the risen 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

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

In your worship packets this week, you received crafts parts to make and decorate an Alleluia Stick. Hopefully, you have done this in advance of today's worship. If not, you could make decorating your Alleluia Stick your afternoon craft project.

Now, with sticks in your hands, every time I say, "Christ is Risen", I want you to wave your stick and shout, "Alleluia!" Let us begin.

When we celebrated Easter five weeks ago, life was uncertain in our country and throughout the world. And yet, no matter the circumstance, we were able to celebrate that CHRIST IS RISEN! (ALLELUIA!)

In the weeks that followed Easter, we still are staying at home—doing homework, doing our jobs, reconnecting with family in the midst of frightening times. And yet, no matter the circumstance, we were able to celebrate that CHRIST IS RISEN! (ALLELUIA!)

Now, deep into the Easter Season, we are seeing our trees and flowers blossom. Our yards are deep green, reminding us that after a

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

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

Holy and Gentle God, we come before you today as your precious children in need of your grace, your mercy and your strength. We affirm that no matter what happens in our lives, we belong to you. You are our Rock and our Refuge. Your love for your creation is from everlasting to everlasting. SILENCE

This pandemic frightens us, O God. We fear for the lives of our family, our friends and our neighbors. We fear for the future of our nations and the nations of this world. Calm our fear, Loving God. Pour your calming power upon our hearts that we might place our complete trust in you. SILENCE

Because of this virus, we find ourselves more isolated than before. We are unable to interact with our loved ones the ways we always have. We hear the voices of family, friends and neighbors through a computer or phone screen, across the yard, on the other side of the window. Help us to find new ways to connect with one another in the days and weeks to come. SILENCE

We lift up to you today those who are unsafe in their own homes. We lift up to you those who have no place to call home. We lift up to you all who have lost jobs in this midst of this crisis. We lift up to you children whose lives have been upended by quarantines who find their safety net at school rather than home. SILENCE

We pray for all whose mental health has deteriorated in the midst of this pandemic. We pray for those struggling to get through each day, each hour, each moment. We ask that your healing presence provide hope and balance from this day forward. SILENCE

We pray for all who are sick. All who are recuperating. All who are breathing with the assistance of ventilators. Pour your healing power and presence upon each. Fill each one with your wind-your breath-your Spirit to ease labored breathing. SILENCE

We pray for all who are mourning the loss of loved ones. We ask your comfort and your peace be upon family and friends who mourn in isolation. SILENCE

Holy God, we also pray for ourselves in this new landscape. Continue to guide us. Show us your Light, your Love, your Peace. SILENCE

And now, we lift up to you the prayers that are upon our hearts. SILENCE

O God, we celebrate that you come to us in Christ Jesus. And because you raised Jesus from the dead, we might experience your new life and your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

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

Some Walls

Peter, Paul and Mary

(YouTube.com; search Peter Paul and Mary Some Walls Live Symphony Orchestra)

*Some walls are made of stone
Sometimes we build our own.
Some walls stand for years
And some wash away with tears*

Some walls. Some walls.

*Some walls are lined with gold
Where some hearts stay safe and cold
Some walls are made of doubt
Holding in and keeping out*

*If there's any hope for love at all
Some walls must fall.*

Some walls. Some walls.

*Some walls are built on pride
Some keep the child inside
Some walls are made in fear
That love let go will disappear.*

*If there's any hope for love at all
Some walls, some walls, must fall.*

*How will you ever know what might be found?
Until you let the walls come tumbling down?*

*If there's any hope for love at all
Some walls, some walls, must fall.*

*If there's any hope for love at all
Some walls, some walls, some walls must fall.*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

(from Eugene Peterson's The Message)

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

² If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing.

³⁻⁷ If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut,

Doesn't have a swelled head,

Doesn't force itself on others,

Isn't always "me first,"

Doesn't fly off the handle,

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,

Doesn't revel when others grovel,
Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,
Puts up with anything,
Trusts God always,
Always looks for the best,
Never looks back,
But keeps going to the end.

⁸⁻¹⁰ Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

¹¹ When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

¹² We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

¹³ But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.

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 13?**

SERMON

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

When Covid19 first made itself known in Asia and began to spread to Europe, Australia, the Americas and Africa, a title of a book I read long ago kept popping into my mind: Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Love in the Time of Cholera. My heart and mind translated that title to Love in the

Time of Coronavirus and in the months since I first heard reports of this novel coronavirus on BBC radio, I have been asking myself, “What does love look like during a global pandemic?”

And now, nearly half a year later, I have some thoughts about love and coronavirus. Love, in a pandemic, has meant staying home so that the most vulnerable among us might live. Love, in these strange new days, is absent of hugs and coffee with neighbors in the kitchen, and grandchildren playing in our backyards. Love, in these past months, has needed to be redefined and honed to this new reality which very well might be with us for quite some time.

One of the people imagining new ways to love is New York City artist Arina Voronova who, in recent months, has created a street art project called The Act of Love. Ms. Voronova has taken her camera into the streets of the city to photograph couples and families with children hugging and kissing with masks on—a reminder that love is love no matter the circumstances we are now living through. She has turned these photographs into posters that she is hanging throughout the city—literally hundreds of these posters—to encourage and uplift people in the city (a city that has been utterly ravaged by this virus).

Dr. James Kuo of Washington State recently had an essay published in the New York Times describing what love looks like in a hospital in the throes of the coronavirus. As a physician battling the virus daily at the hospital, his wife and children have left their home to live with extended family members so that he won't infect his family. That's what love looks like. Love, Dr. Kuo writes, is found in the “I love you's” of a video chat with a grandson to a grandmother. Love is whispering I love you to a spouse or friend before going on a ventilator. Love is the tears of nurses, physicians and aides who lose so many of their patients and yet keep offering compassion and care with each new day.

And what about our own communities? Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like women in our community sewing and giving away literally thousands of cloth facemasks. Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like meals cooked and delivered to someone who is homebound. Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like a young mom creating a Facebook page of at-home crafts and activities to keep children occupied while in isolation. Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like people in our

community ordering MORE meals from restaurants in order to keep small businesses in town alive. Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like the boxes and bags of food and toiletry donations that pour into St. Paul's Blessing Pantry each day. Love in the Time of Coronavirus looks like monetary gifts given by members and neighbors to keep the Pantry running.

And love within our homes in a Time of Coronavirus? Whether we are living alone or are living with multiple family members, love means taking care of ourselves by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and limiting drugs and alcohol. Friends, when we take care of ourselves/when we love ourselves, those around us benefit as much as we do.

Our scripture reading for today: the familiar chapter in 1 Corinthians, offers instructions on how to love. The Apostle Paul, who wrote this letter to the Corinthian Christians was NOT speaking about romantic love—he was speaking about the love known in the Greek as agape. Agape love is unconditional—mirrored in the love that God has for his creation and for each of us. Agape love doesn't wax and wane—it remains steady and steadfast—even in the midst of Covid19.

Today's reading jumps right in after 1 Corinthians, chapter 12 which speaks of how we are to use God's spiritual gifts given to each of us. Chapter 12 talks about how each of us is gifted by God in delightfully diverse ways, but in Christ, those gifts come together to create the Body of Christ in our homes, our communities, our nation and the world. Then, the last sentence in Chapter 12 says, "But now I want to lay out a far better way for you."

And what is that way? The answer comes immediately through today's reading. According to Paul, as Christians we are called to live in the Spirit, live in oneness, live as disciples by HOW WE LOVE. Not how we vote. Or how we pray. Or how we work. Or how we judge. Or how we eat, drink or even spend our money. We are called to be disciples of the risen Christ by how we demonstrate love to others.

And what does this love look like? According to Paul, love does not harbor grudges. It is infinitely patient. It is unafraid. It never gives up. Love tears down the walls between people rather than building up barriers and

hardened hearts. Like our anthem, Peter, Paul and Mary's Some Walls—love tears down walls. All walls.

In the midst of this pandemic when it seems walls and barriers have been erected to keep us apart, it is up to each of us to figure out how to demonstrate love—enduring love, unconditional love, active love in new ways. We need to be incredibly intentional.

When Concordia University in Irvine California closed down its campus this spring to faculty and students and continued to teach and learn online, the university put a powerful essay on its website, reminding those connected with the university to find new ways to love: by reaching out to neighbors experiencing intense isolation. The university went on to write this: *In this time of crisis, each of God's people might ask themselves, "How is God calling me to serve?" There will be many tangible needs in our communities. Prior to this outbreak, loneliness and isolation were serious problems in our nation. Social distancing, so very important now, will exacerbate these feelings. As Christians, we need to reach out in tangible ways to let our neighbors know that they are not alone.*

As you are able, consider how God might be calling you to listen to others or speak a comforting word, to help provide food or necessities to those who are lacking, or to share other blessings with those who are struggling. A phone call can be very encouraging to those who are isolated. Consider writing letters and placing them in your neighbor's mailboxes with your contact information. Encourage them to reach out if they need anything; like dropping off extra supplies to an elderly person who was not able to prepare and can be done safely. Even in times of social distancing, we can safely reach out in mercy and love. God is calling his people to be a blessing and, most importantly, to provide hope to those who are fearful.

I couldn't have stated this any better. Walls crumble with love. Hate and distrust dissolve with love. Broken hearts can heal with love. Frightened children find a refuge in love. It is our call as this particular (and currently scattered) Body of Christ to demonstrate love each and every day—especially during this pandemic when lives have been turned upside down and many of us do not even know how to begin to count our losses.

Friends (singing): If there's any hope for love at all, some walls must fall. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: What an abundance of gifts we have to offer: musical talent, the melody of laughter, the use of our hands in cooking and repairs, the use of our minds in problem solving, curiosity, compassion, patience, urgency, spiritual reservoirs, financial resources, obedience and the courage to act. All these gifts, and others which bear our personal marks are symbolized in our offering for the work of St. Paul Church. Let us commit ourselves in service as we worship God with our offerings. During our Safe at Home order, you are encouraged to give your tithes and offerings to St. Paul online or by sending them in the worship packet you received this week.

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 return to you, O God, gifts that are not our own. We gratefully know that they come from your generous hand. As we follow in your way, may all that we have and all that we do be an expression of our gratitude to you. Amen.

HYMN

For Freedom, Christ Has Set Us Free!

Tune: ELLACOMB 76.76 D ("I Sing the Mighty Power of God"), *Gesangbuch der Herzogl. Wierttembergisch, Katholischen Hofkappelle*, 1784; alt. 1868 Text: Copyright 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

N.C. $\frac{A\flat}{C}$ Fm Eb Ab Db $\frac{A\flat}{C}$ Db Eb Ab

1 "For free - dom, Christ has set us free!" What joy is ours to claim!
 2 We' - re clothed in Christ and we belong; Now no one waits out - side.
 3 Now, Sp - ir - it filled may we be led From ways that would de - stroy.

N.C. $\frac{A\flat}{C}$ Fm Eb Ab Db Fm Ebsus Eb Ab

No more en - slav - ed, hu - man-i - ty Finds life in Je - sus' name
 In him we find our com - mon song; Old ways no more di - vide.
 May we your peo - ple turn in - stead To lives of love and joy.

Ab $\frac{E\flat}{G}$ Ab Db Eb Ab $\frac{E\flat}{G}$ Ab Db Eb

We try, Lord to be jus - ti - fied Through all the works we do.
 "It is no long - er I who live, But Christ who lives in me."
 May we find peace that makes us whole And pat - ience eve - ry - where.

N.C. $\frac{A\flat}{C}$ Fm Eb Ab Db Fm Ebsus Eb Ab

Yet you adopt us, say - ing, "Child, It's Christ who makes you new."
 He died for us, new life to give-- And new id - en - ti - ty.
 God, give us kind - ness, self - con - trol, And hearts and hands that share.

BENEDICTION

A blessing: The world is too dangerous and too beautiful for anything but love. May your eyes be so blessed you see God in every one. Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor. May your hands be so blessed that everything you touch is a sacrament. Your lips, so you speak nothing but truth in love. May your feet be so blessed you run to those who need you. And may your heart be so opened, so set on fire, that your love, YOUR LOVE, changes everything. Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Pass the Love*

Pass the Love

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

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

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

Bless the Ho - ly Name. Praise our__ God.

Chords: F, Gm7, F, Gm7, F/A, F/Bb, Gm9, C7, F, Gm7, F, Gm7, F/A, F/Bb, Gm9, G7, C, Fmaj7, Dm, F/G, F/C, Am7, Dm7, Gm7, F/C, C7, F

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

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

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"Halle Halle Halle" Words and music by Hal H. Hobson ©1998 Hope Publishing Company

"Pass the Love" Words and Music by Doris Ketner Copyright ©2000. All rights reserved.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 your hands and 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.

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

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: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78283243697?pwd=cTFzYVIPWjZRZ0dEQUFDT015TlljUT09>

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

Fundraiser for local small businesses-the Southwestern Auglaize County Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Homestretch Sportswear to sell grey T-shirts with black printing for \$15 a shirt. St. Paul Church has joined this partnership. The Chamber logo will be on the back and our St. Paul logo on the front. For every shirt sold, \$10 comes back to St. Paul Church. You can order your T-shirt online at: <https://homestretchsportswear.printavo.com/merch/golden-triangle>
Orders need to be received no later than May 22.



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 **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 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.

BE THE CHURCH



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Stay Home. Social Distance. Wash Your Hands.
Check on the Elderly. Live Stream Worship.
Give electronically. Support each other.
Love God. Flatten the curve. Pray Daily.
So we can all enjoy this life.

Content Credit: Julia Roberts,
LCSW, Philadelphia, PA