

"This leaf was in the Bible. Maybe it's the one Adam wore!"

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> Like and follow our page St. Paul United Church of Christ – New Bremen, Ohio on Facebook Rev. Becky Senior Pastor Pastor Dee Associate Pastor Jeff Quellhorst-Council President

Welcome to St. Paul UCC today, 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.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Church-Covid-19 is a respiratory illness that causes flu-like symptoms including fever, vomiting and difficulty breathing. Good hygiene helps prevent the spread not only of coronavirus but also of colds and flu! **Stay home if you are sick.** Sneeze/cough into the crook of your elbow or a tissue, not your hand. **Wash immediately or use hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.** Avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes. On July 23 Governor DeWine mandated mask wearing in public, including houses of worship. Masks are essential to help keep those around us safe. Thank You for cooperating.

IN PERSON WORSHIP NOTES:

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

Please fill out worship cards located in the pews and place in offering plate as you exit. It is very important these cards are filled out by everyone who is here in case we need to contact you. Thank you!!!!

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 Packets containing children's bulletins and other activities are available on the tables. Please take the whole packet home with you. Thank you!

WIFI Connection-connect via "St Paul – Guest" Password: Godlovesyou

The * indicates all who are able may stand

September 13, 2020 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Leaders

Ministers Rev. Becky Erb Strang Pastor Dee Schroer Cheyenne Olt Dick Hudson The Congregation Senior Pastor Associate Pastor Accompanist/Vocalist Organist

GATHERING MUSIC

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

RINGING OF THE BELLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*WELCOME SONG No Matter

No Matter



*CALL TO WORSHIP

(from <u>Flames of the Spirit</u>, Ruth C. Duck, Editor, 1985)

Leader: In the darkness and emptiness of much we call life, the Spirit moves among us, calling us into new being.

People: We are here to seek light amid the shadows, fulfillment out of hollowness and despair.

Leader: From separation and bitterness, apathy and hardened hearts, God in Christ calls us to steadfast love and reconciliation.

People: Gathered or scattered, we have come to find healing and peace, to experience forgiveness, acceptance and purpose.

Leader: In the midst of the ordinary, God has come to us. In our everyday worlds, God continues to visit and redeem.

Unison: Come, Holy Spirit, to baptize us with fire. We wait your word and the power of your benediction.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

81

We Gather Together

verses 1 & 2

GOD OF PROVIDENCE & CARE

We Gather Together









WORDS: Netherlands folk hymn; tr. Theodore Baker (1851-1934) MUSIC: Nederlandtsch Gedenckclanck, 1626; arr. Edward Kremser (1838-1914)

KREMSER 12.11.12.11.

*SERVICE OF CONFESSION

Leader: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In humility and faith, let us confess our sin to God.

People: Holy One, too often our hearts are cold and without gratitude. Too often our hands are passive and unwilling to carry out acts of mercy. Too often our lips are pursed tightly, unwilling to speak words of love. Too often we are indeed separated and alienated from our better self, separated and alienated from God. Forgive us, O God. Forgive us and call us back into your merciful embrace. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

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.

*GLORIA PATRI Glory Be to the Father Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: Different, Yet the Same

Hold a clear jar filled with M&M's. Talk about favorite colors. Is one person's favorite color more important than another's favorite color? Does the yellow candy taste better than the green candy?

We know that although these candies are different colors on the outside, they are the same yummy sweetness on the inside.

God has created each of us unique in many ways, too.

One way is that we look different on the outside. Our skins colors are different. Our eye colors are different. Our hair colors are different. Some of us are right-handed. Some of us are left-handed. Some of us have freckles. Some of us can roll our tongues; others of us cannot.

Psalm 139:14a. *I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* In this psalm the writer points out that we have been wonderfully made. The Hebrew for that word is pala (pronounced paw-law). This means to distinguish, show marvelous, set apart, make wonderfully.

Friends—we are wonderfully made by God, no matter how different we are. Just like the M&M's are different on the outside, so God has created each of us as unique and special. We may all be different in a variety of ways, but one way we are the same is that we are all created to be filled. M&M's are filled with chocolate. You are created to be filled with God's love.

This coming week, treat each person you encounter as filled with God's love. Because they are. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN

Thy Word

WORD & TEACHING

664

Thy Word









WORDS: Amy Grant (1960-); para. Psalm 119:105 MUSIC: Michael W. Smith (1957-)

Words and Music © 1984 Meadowgreen Music (Admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing) and Word Music



PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE Joys: Worshipping together! Katie Jackson's Ordination today! Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Deb Lear, Erin Rammel, Ethel Mesloh, Julie Vogel, Jan Dammeyer, Drew Wray, Cindy Newman, and Pastor Dee Schroer.

PASTORAL PRAYER, PERSONAL PRAYER, AND THE LORD'S PRAYER. (adapted from a prayer written by the Rev. David Long-Higgins, Heartland Conference Minister)

We thank you, O God, that you have awakened us from a sleep that renews us to a life that restores. Move our thoughts and actions to the new covenant, new hope you offer to us in Jesus. Continue to pour your Holy Spirit into our midst. SILENCE

We ask, O God, that you fill us with trust—that we might see your face in the mystery of undeserved grace. May that grace smooth out our rough edges, melt our hardened hearts, and call us to lay down our weapons of destruction. Place within us your will. SILENCE

Just as we are born and renewed at our baptism, we pray that the water that touches us this day might be a sacrament—something sacred—for the days to come. As our confirmation students begin their classes this week, fill each one with your baptismal touch that they might be moved to offer you their praise. SILENCE

Healing and Holy God, we pray that the waves of your power and presence pour upon those who are sick: physically, mentally or spiritually. Wash each one in the waters of your love. May the waves of your power and presence pour upon those who are grieving, those who are lost, those who need your touch in their lives this day. SILENCE

Lord of the Universe, awaken our hearts as we listen for your word this day. SILENCE

Gentle One: We thank you for stilling the storms in our lives, for healing us of all that ills us and for loving us beyond measure. May we share your love, your life, your hope with others. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus who gave us this prayer. **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 *I Can Only Imagine* (YouTube search: *I Can Only Imagine* by Mercy Me—cover by One Voice Children's Choir)

I can only imagine what it will be like When I walk, by your side I can only imagine what my eyes will see When you face is before me I can only imagine I can only imagine

Surrounded by You glory What will my heart feel Will I dance for you Jesus Or in awe of You be still Will I stand in your presence Or to my knees will I fall Will I sing hallelujah Will I sing hallelujah Will I be able to speak at all I can only imagine I can only imagine

I can only imagine when that day comes When I find myself standing in the Son I can only imagine when all I would do is forever Forever worship You I can only imagine I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory What will my heart feel Will I dance for You, Jesus Or in awe of you be still Will I stand in your presence Or to my knees will I fall Will I sing hallelujah Will I be able to speak at all I can only imagine I can only imagine

Surrounded by Your glory What will my heart feel Will I dance for You, Jesus Or in awe of you be still Will I stand in Your presence Or to my knees will I fall Will I sing hallelujah Will I be able to speak at all I can only imagine I can only imagine

I can only imagine I can only imagine I can only imagine I can only imagine I can only imagine when all I will do Is forever, forever worship You I can only imagine

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Genesis 2:4-7, 15-17 (Eugene Peterson's <u>The Message</u>) *This is the story of how it all started, of Heaven and Earth when they were created.*

At the time God made Earth and Heaven, before any grasses or shrubs had sprouted from the ground—God hadn't yet sent rain on Earth, nor was there anyone around to work the ground (the whole Earth was watered by underground springs)—God formed Man out of dirt from the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. The Man came alive—a living soul! God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden to work the ground and keep it in order.

God commanded the Man, "You can eat from any tree in the garden, except from the Tree-of-Knowledge-of-Good-and-Evil. Don't eat from it. The moment you eat from that tree, you're dead."

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Genesis 3:1-8

(Eugene Peterson's <u>The Message</u>) The serpent was clever, more clever than any wild animal God had made. He spoke to the Woman: "Do I understand that God told you not to eat from any tree in the garden?"

²⁻³ The Woman said to the serpent, "Not at all. We can eat from the trees in the garden. It's only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'Don't eat from it; don't even touch it or you'll die."

⁴⁻⁵ The serpent told the Woman, "You won't die. God knows that the moment you eat from that tree, you'll see what's really going on. You'll be just like God, knowing everything, ranging all the way from good to evil."

⁶ When the Woman saw that the tree looked like good eating and realized what she would get out of it—she'd know everything!—she took and ate the fruit and then gave some to her husband, and he ate.

⁷ Immediately the two of them did "see what's really going on"—saw themselves naked! They sewed fig leaves together as makeshift clothes for themselves.

⁸ When they heard the sound of God strolling in the garden in the evening breeze, the Man and his Wife hid in the trees of the garden, hid from God.

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

In a normal year, today would have been Kick-Off Sunday. Homecoming Sunday. Sunday School would have begun. Children would have received their Bibles. Sunday School teachers and youth leaders would be commissioned. The Chancel Choir would return to the choir loft. We would be singing our hymns loudly and joyfully.

But this is not a normal year. Seven months into this pandemic and it feels as if there is no end in sight. Life in 2020 has been filled with disruptions: our health has been compromised. Many of us have lost jobs. Sports have been cancelled. School for our children looks nothing like school a year ago. Our Chancel Choir cannot safely sing in this sacred space. And speaking of sacred space, many of us have not returned to the sanctuary for worship, preferring to worship online and at home.

Many of us are asking, "Where is God in the midst of so much disruption, so much suffering, so much death? Where can hope be found?"

Today's scripture readings may not give us the full answer to these questions, but they do point us in the right direction.

In our first reading, we hear the beginning of the second Creation Story (yes: the Bible has two very different creation stories included!). Instead of being formed over the course of six days, we hear of creation beginning, but not fully completed, until God had created man—out of the dust of the ground, breathing into this glorious creation his own breath/wind/spirit.

In the second story, we hear the first part of the story of the Garden of Eden. In this portion of the story, the serpent convinces the woman to eat from the tree of knowledge (something God explicitly forbade). And we know how the story goes, she not only eats the fruit of the tree, she gave some also to the man, her companion. At that moment (before they were tossed out of the garden), they see themselves as naked and vulnerable and quickly fashion leaves into clothing, hiding from God when he walked their way.

Mark Twain, in the 1905 Christmas Edition of Harper's Bazaar, penned a short story called "Eve's Diary"—following Eve in the Garden trying to make friends with the shy Adam. Making friends with the serpent. Being tossed out of the garden. The story ends many years after Adam and Eve have left Eden. And this is what Eve had to say (according to Mark Twain): When I look back, the Garden is a dream to me. It was surpassingly beautiful, and now it is lost, and I shall not see it anymore. The Garden is lost, but I have found him, and am content. Then, after the death of Eve, Adam simple writes, Now that she is gone, I know one thing; wheresoever she was, there was Eden.

Perhaps this is what we need to take away from today's worship. That, while we have been tossed from the Garden, all is not lost. We have glimpses of heaven whenever enemies become friends. We have glimpses of Eden whenever we welcome strangers into our midst.

I want to tell you a story today about a child's glimpse of heaven. Since Chelsea Phaire was 7 years old, she wanted to start her own charity. Several times a year she would ask her parents, "Are we starting Chelsea's Charity yet?"

A year ago last September, when Chelsea turned ten, she began in earnest. Asking for art supplies rather than birthday gifts, Chelsea used the donations to provide 40 art kids to a homeless shelter in New York. Her parents helped her set up an Amazon Wishlist, and the donations steadily arrived. By the time Covid19 hit the United States, Chelsea had already donated over 1000 art kits to homeless shelters, foster homes, women's shelters and schools impacted by gun violence. Chelsea personally delivered every kit to each school or agency, spending time with the children.

Then Covid19 arrived. Chelsea could no longer deliver the art kits personally, but she was not deterred. Last spring alone she sent out another 500 kits to homeless shelters and foster homes who were scrambling to meet the needs of children who were now sheltering in place. For many of these children before the pandemic, art supplies were accessed at school. Now at home, they benefited from Chelsea's vision.

And what is Chelsea's vision? Chelsea said this to a reporter last spring, "I feel good inside knowing how happy the children are when they get their art kits. Now my dream is to meet every kid in the entire world and give them art. Who knows, maybe if we do that and then our kids also share art kits, we'll have world peace."

Truly—a vision of heaven on earth. The good news, even in the midst of this coronavirus is this: Heaven is all around us, but we need to open our eyes to see it in its disguised form on earth. God does not zap us with illness and tragedy and sorrow. Instead, God abides with us through illness and tragedy and sorrow. God offers us glimpses of Eden, glimpses of heaven, even when the future seems bleak. So this week, seek Eden. Create heaven for someone else. Show compassion and mercy. Exercise forgiveness where there has been a hardness of your heart. Listen not to the serpents in your life, but to the breath/spirit/wind of God calling you home. Amen.



Chelsea Phaire, founder of Chelsea's Charity, with art kits she made for children.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: While the people of God wandered in the desert, God provided manna from heaven, water from a rock, and a law to guide their way and to shape their life together. God has fed us, too, and stayed with us every moment of our own journey so that we are never alone. We are here today to be fed, and to gather in the name of Jesus so we can reach out in ministry to the world God loves. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise. *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)

One and Eternal God of time and space, we respond to you with joy as we lift up our tithes and offerings. The opportunity to share is a blessing for which we are thankful. Your generous provision of our needs prompts us to be generous in return. Accomplish your purposes, we pray, through these gifts and in our lives. Amen. I Love to Tell the Story

HANKEY 7.6.7.6.D.Ref.

WITNESS & MISSION 560

I Love to Tell the Story













WORDS: A. Catherine Hankey (1834-1911) MUSIC: William G. Fischer (1835-1912)



*BENEDICTION: Now may God who loves us and gives us eternal comfort and the gift of grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good word and work in all your days to come. Amen.



*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

Let us share in the joy of the Lord by passing the Peace of Christ with one another.

As the ushers are dismissing you, let us pass the peace of Christ with each other while maintaining our 6 ft physical distance. Direct eye contact, loving words, and a warm smile are as meaningful as a traditional handshake or hug.

*RECESSIONAL

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are given in loving memory of Jane Longfellow by the Longfellow Family.

Meetings-Mission Team-Sunday, September 20 at 11:15 in the Sanctuary.

Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions Avg.-105, August 30-Sunday Worship Online-313, In Person-54

Blessing Pantry-is open 10am-noon and 1pm-3pm Monday-Friday and 5:30pm-7:30pm Tuesday's. All Donations Welcome-Thank you! There is 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 shoes. Thank you!

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!

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.

Opening Day Sunday School/Youth Groups-Due to COVID-19, Sunday School will start Sunday, October 4 in-person and Youth Groups will start Wednesday, October 7. More information will be in your mailbox soon. Thanks, Pastor Dee. **Confirmation begins Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30pm.** Confirmation this year will primarily be through Zoom. The students and teachers will meet Wednesday evenings online beginning September 16 at 6:30pm. However, one Wednesday each month we will meet in-person with mentors. If you or a family member, eighth grade or above, have not been confirmed, you are invited to contact Pastor Becky about joining this class.

Zoom Bible Study-All are invited beginning on Thursday, September 17 at 6:30 p.m. Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on or logging onto: <u>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88567175194?pwd=K2FBaGYzRUpaREIwTj</u> <u>c4Q1Y4b3UrUT09</u> Once you are logged on, you will need the following:

Meeting ID: 885 6717 5194Passcode: 229014*If you would like an email version of this to make logging on easier,
simply email Pastor Becky: berbstrang@stpaulnb.org

September Book Club is September 27 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom. We will discuss Ashlee Eiland's *Human (Kind)*. 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. Join Zoom Meeting by clicking on or logging onto:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81861071237?pwd=WTIEOTRCeXgrVGozNjgwL056NFIRUT09Once you are logged on, you will need the following:Meeting ID: 818 6107 1237Password: 218178*If you would like an email version of this to make logging on easier,

simply email Pastor Becky: <u>berbstrang@stpaulnb.org</u>

Ushers Needed-Myra Hanenkratt, our Senior Deacon, is still seeking ushers for in-person worship. If this is something you are willing to do, please contact her or the church office.

September/October Upper Rooms-have arrived! They are available at the East entrance to the education building and on Sunday's in the Sanctuary. Or please call the church office if you would like one and we will gladly mail one to you.

Worship Schedule for September

Sunday's in September-we will be worshipping via Facebook Live and in person in our sanctuary at 10:15am.

September monthly mission-Local Aid As the name implies, Local Aid helps individuals and families in our surrounding communities, meeting the needs of daily life. Aid can come in the form of gas cards, rent money and other miscellaneous repairs and expenses that may occur. To give towards Local Aid, please mark your giving envelope accordingly or bring to the church office in an envelope labeled "Local Aid". Thank you!

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.