

September 21, 2020

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

In these gorgeous autumn days, the Spirit's wind blows gently in our community. The Spirit's healing breath surrounds our nation and the world in these troubled times.

We are aware that none of you received last week's worship packet. When this happened once earlier this summer, we were told that Ohio's mail sorting facilities have been impacted by the coronavirus and are currently understaffed. Because of this uncertainty, you can access the weekly packet/bulletin/letter each week at www.stpaulnb.org. Thank you for your understanding.

We continue to thank God for your ongoing financial support of St. Paul Church in the midst of Covid19. The giving envelope included in this mailing serves as an invitation and reminder for your continuing support of the many ministries and missions of our congregation as we seek to serve Jesus by loving our neighbors both near and far.

One of the missions of St. Paul Church that has increased exponentially during the pandemic is the Blessing Pantry. Daily we welcome guests into our space to obtain food, toiletries, diapers, and cleaning supplies. Your generous donations combine with the donations of our wider community in keeping the Pantry stocked and ready for our guests.


This week we will begin the process of moving the Blessing Pantry out of the auditorium and into its home in the north hallway.

Sunday School begins on October 4. The nursery will reopen that morning during worship to accommodate families.

Our sanctuary air conditioning Project of the Year is complete and fully funded. Thank you for your generosity! Any funds given to the Project of the Year for the rest of 2020 will go toward repairing the steeple roof and repairing the gutters on the education building. Council will determine the order of these projects depending on the funds donated.

May your week be filled with blessings, joy and service!

Grace and Peace,


 Jeff Quellhorst Roland Dicke Becky Erb Strang Dee Schroer
 Council President Council VP Senior Pastor Associate Pastor

Financial Information as of September 14, 2020

Operating Fund

Beg. Balance (\$2,974.14)

Giving Income \$3,302.00(weekly)

Endowment Transfers \$28,457.19(ytd)

Income \$218,577.78 (YTD)

Expenses \$218,135.11(YTD)

Balance **(\$2,531.47)**

Building Maint & Property Care

Beg. Balance \$83,428.04

Income \$11,561.00 (YTD)

Endowment Income \$2,627.44 (YTD)

Expenses \$27,666.32(YTD)

Balance \$69,950.16

Local Aid

Beg. Balance \$9,934.05

Income \$13,519.00(YTD)

Bless Pantry Inc. \$10,685.55

Expenses \$17,491.62(YTD)

Bless Pantry Ex.\$9,498.35

Balance \$7,148.63

Our Church Wider Mission

Pledge \$30,000.00

Income \$130.00(weekly)

Income \$17,944.00 (YTD)

Project of the Year

Income \$50.00(weekly)

Balance \$1,651.00

Please keep the family of Levi Oaks in your prayers. Levi passed away Sunday, September 13, 2020. Services to celebrate his life were held Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at Spring Grove Funeral Home, Cincinnati. Levi is the husband of June (Hertenstein) Oaks.

Please keep the family of Zelta Fogt in your prayers. Zelta passed away Friday, September 18, 2020. Services to celebrate her life were held Wednesday, September 23 at Baker Hazel & Snider Funeral Home in Dayton.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking faith home

God directs our ways.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 21:23-32	Parable of the two sons
Monday	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	God's ways are fair
Tuesday	Philippians 2:1-13	Christ shows us humility
Wednesday	Exodus 17:1-17	Water from the rock
Thursday	Psalms 78:1-4, 12-16	What God has done
Friday	James 1:19-27	Hearing and doing God's word
Saturday	Psalms 25:1-9	Prayer for guidance and help
Sunday	Matthew 21:33-46	Parable of the vineyard tenants

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"[W]ork out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." **Philippians 2:12b-13 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, teach us to know your ways and to do them with humility and compassion for all that you have created through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 25:4)

Mealtime Prayer:

Good and gracious God, we thank you for providing for our every need, including the gift of this food; we pray through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May God guide you in the way of truth and guard your life with steadfast love and faithfulness. (Psalm 25)



© 2019 Milestones Ministry, LLC. All rights reserved.

SEPTEMBER 27, 2020
HYMN OF THE WEEK
We Are All One in Mission

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:

- Do you ask for help sometimes when making decisions? Why or why not?
- Is there a time when you asked for God's help in making a decision? If so, tell about it.
- How does reading the Bible and having conversations with other believers help guide your life?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Philippians 2:1-13.

The Apostle Paul speaks to the church at Philippi and encourages the people to live with others with humility (vv. 3-4). He uses Christ as our model for this way of life as Christ Jesus took on our human existence and "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death" (v. 8). With this as a guide, Paul exhorts believers to pursue the Christian life because it matters to others, to the world, and to God. Knowing how hard it is to live this life faithfully, he states, "work out our salvation in fear and trembling" (v. 12b). But this is not a fear that prevents us from acting. It is actually a sense of awe and reverence that frees us to live and act because God is with us, behind and in front of us in both our actions and our very desire to do the will of God (v. 13). It can be overwhelming to wonder how to live as a Christian. Paul encourages us to go forth with humility to love others and trust God. Think of a situation that is hard for you to know what you should do. When this happens, pray to God for wisdom and faith to act with love and humility.

Pray: God of justice and mercy, guide our days and our deeds in the peace of Christ. Amen.

SERVICE

In Philippians 2, Paul is asking us to imitate Jesus by being of the same mind and showing compassion, love, and humility to others. Showing interest in others by listening and praying for them is one way to be compassionate. Be mindful of listening closely to the conversations you have with others.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Lifting our hands is one way to show praise to God. In the Old Testament there are people (like Leah and Moses) who lift their hands in praise to God. This is an ancient pose of prayer and a motion used to open a person to receiving God's blessing. Lift your hands and pray daily this week: **To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust. Amen.** (Psalm 25:1-2a)



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



Stained glass window by Liz Quantock

St. Paul United Church of Christ

119 North Franklin Street

New Bremen, Ohio 45869

Phone (419-629-2502), Fax (419-629-3207)

Email stpaulnb@nktelco.net or stpaulnb@gmail.com

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

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 27, 2020
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Leaders

Ministers
Rev. Becky Erb Strang
Pastor Dee Schroer
Cheyenne Olt

The Congregation
Senior Pastor
Associate Pastor
Accompanist/Vocalist

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

$\text{♩} = 120$

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 begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is simple and repetitive. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, Dm, Gm7, C, F, F7. The lyrics are: "No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what no mat-ter where you are on the".

The second staff continues the melody with chords: Bb, G7, F, Dm, G7, Gm7, C7. The lyrics are: "jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter".

The third staff continues with chords: F, Dm, Gm7, C, F, F7. The lyrics are: "who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the".

The fourth staff concludes with chords: Bb, G7, F, Dm, Gm7, C7, C, F, F. The lyrics are: "jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-comed by God's grace. grace." There are two boxed options at the end of the staff: "To verses" and "Last time, Fine".

*CALL TO WORSHIP

(from Flames of the Spirit, Ruth C. Duck, Editor, 1985)

Leader: We give praise and thanks to God,

People: Who has delivered us from apathy and has brought us into the light.

Leader: We do not live in alienation from God.

People: We are not callous. We seek to be kind.

Leader: We seek to put off our old nature and be renewed: body, mind and spirit!

People: Putting on the new nature, created in the likeness of God,

Leader: And revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

D D+ Gmaj9 G6 A7 $\frac{G}{A}$ A7 $\frac{G}{D}$ D G G(\sharp) G

1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther, there is no
 2 Sum - mer and win - ter, and spring - time and har - vest, sun, moon and
 3 Par - don for sin and a peace that en - dur - eth, thy own dear

$\frac{D}{F\sharp}$ $\frac{A7}{E}$ D $\frac{E}{B}$ B7 E7 A A7 D $\frac{A9}{D}$

shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
 stars in their cours - es a - bove join with all na - ture in
 pres - ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to - day and bright

D Em $\frac{D}{F\sharp}$ Gmaj7 G6 G \sharp dim7 $\frac{D}{A}$ $\frac{F\sharp m}{A}$ A7 D

pas - sions they fail not; as thou has been thou for - ev - er wilt be.
 man - i - fold wit - ness to thy great faith - ful - ness, mer - cy and love.
 hope for to - mor - row, bless - ings all mine, with ten thou - sand be - side!

Refrain A $\frac{G}{D}$ D B7 $\frac{Am}{E}$ Em

Great is thy faith - ful - ness! Great is thy faith - ful - ness!

A7 D Dm6 $\frac{A}{E}$ $\frac{D}{E}$ E7 A A7 D $\frac{A9}{D}$

Morn - ing by morn - ing new mer - cies I see; all I have need - ed thy

WORDS: Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)
 MUSIC: William M. Runyan (1870-1957)
 Words and Music © 1923, Ren. 1951 Hope Publishing Company

FAITHFULNESS
 11.10.11.10.Ref.

D Em $\frac{D}{F\sharp}$ Gmaj7 G6 G \sharp dim7 $\frac{D}{A}$ A7 D

hand hath pro - vid - ed — great is thy faith - ful - ness, Lord, un - to me!

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Leader: Let us come before the Lord, our God, confessing our sin and our brokenness.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

When we put off until tomorrow our response to your call, forgive us, O God. When our good intentions are not followed by good actions, have patience with us, O God. When we harden our hearts, making all kinds of excuses why we should not serve you, O God, have mercy. Today when we hear your voice, may we rise up to hear and obey, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION OF SIN

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Here is the good news: when we recognize our need and seek God's help we can count on God's gifts. God deals wondrously with all of us, pouring out spiritual blessings. Relationships with God and our sisters and brothers become more important when we welcome Jesus Christ into our lives. Let us be the church, the Body of Christ, in our world!

People: Thanks be to God!

*HALLELUJAH!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jaht Hal - le -

lu - jaht Hal - le - lu - jaht

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are placed below the notes. Chord symbols (C, Am7, D7, D, Em) are placed above the notes to indicate accompaniment. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final double bar line at the end of the fourth staff.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Kennedy Ann Fortman

Congregational Response: We promise our love, support and care.

BAPTISMAL HYMN

Borning Cry

BAPTISM

680

Borning Cry

Unison G Gmaj7 $\frac{Am}{G}$ G $\frac{Am}{G}$ Gmaj7 $\frac{Am}{G}$

1 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be
 2 When you heard the won - der of the Word I was
 3 In the mid - dle a - ges of your life, not too

G Gmaj7 $\frac{Am}{G}$ G $\frac{Am6}{G}$

there when you are old. I re - joiced the day you
 there to cheer you on. You were raised to praise the
 old, no long - er young, I'll be there to guide you

G $\frac{Am}{G}$ G $\frac{C}{E}$ Am7 D7sus D7 G (*Fine*)

were bap - tized to see your life un - fold.
 liv - ing Lord to whom you now be - long.
 through the night, com - plete what I've be - gun.

C $\frac{G}{B}$ Am G

I was there when you were but a child with a
 If you find some - one to share your time, and you
 When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you

Am D D9 G Am $\frac{G}{B}$ C2 $\frac{Am6}{C}$

faith to suit you well; in a blaze of light you
 join shut your hearts as one, eyes, I'll be there to make your
 shut your wear - y eyes, I'll be there as I have

Bm7 Em A $\frac{G}{A}$ $\frac{F\#m}{A}$ $\frac{Em}{A}$ D D7

wan - dered off to find where de - mons dwell.
 vers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun.
 al - ways been with just one more sur - prise. *D.C. (vs. 1) al fine*

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Sacrament of Baptism Emmy Lou Quellhorst, daughter of John & Beth Quellhorst was baptized Saturday, September 26. Her sponsors are Keith & Andrea Quellhorst. Congratulations, Emmy. Kennedy Ann Fortman, daughter of Ty & Lori Fortman, baptized Sunday, September 26. Her sponsors are Kirk Greber & Kerri Orszula. Congratulations, Kennedy. **Wedding Celebration** Philip Borkowski & Kelli Nosek were united in marriage Saturday, September 19, 2020. Congratulations, Kelli & Philip. **Birth Candle** welcomes Josiah Jay Hainline born Sunday, September 6, 2020. Josiah is the son of Rodney & Bonnie Hainline, grandson of Denny & Linda Hainline and great-grandson of Loree Nedderman. Welcome Josiah!!!! Worshipping together!

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Rosie Heitkamp, Zelta Fogt, Karen Fox, Deb Lear, Erin Rammel, Ethel Mesloh, Julie Vogel, Jan Dammeyer, Drew Wray, Cindy Newman, and Pastor Dee Schroer.

Please keep the family of Levi Oaks in your prayers. Levi passed away Saturday, September 12, 2020.

Please keep the family of Zelta Fogt in your prayers. Zelta passed away Friday, September 18, 2020.

Please keep the family of Erin Rammel in your prayers. Erin passed away Monday, September 21, 2020.

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

We come before you this day, O God, overwhelmed by the bad news
that knocks on our doors and is announced in the news each day. With
all of the hurt, anger, destruction, violence in our nation and in our world,
it seems too much for our hearts to handle. SILENCE

Grant us your grace, O God. Give us a Holy Pause—a moment or
two when we can catch our breath, deeply breathing in your Spirit in these
difficult times. SILENCE

Shape us, O God. Mold us in your image. Fashion us with your grace
that we might face the world with your eyes, your heart, your love.
SILENCE

We thank you, O God, that you have gifted us with this day to praise
your name, to love in your name, to serve in your name. Empower us,
embolden us, enable us to serve you more fully as we seek to love our
friends, our neighbors and even our enemies. SILENCE

We pray today for those who are sick, those who are recuperating,
those who are riddled with addiction and despair. We pray today for those
who mourn the loss of beloveds. We pray today for those who are
oppressed, those who are persecuted, those whose homeland is no
longer safe. SILENCE

O God, may the urgencies of our lives slow down for this Holy
Moment we offer to you. SILENCE

Fill us, O God, with your love, your grace, your desire, your holy
power that is found in profound gentleness. SILENCE

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 *Hymn for Resurrection* by Gene Cotton
(Amazon Music: Hymn for Resurrection by Gene Cotton)

*There is a man; some call him Jesus.
Some call him fool; fool that he is.
He comes every third day down by the waters:
Preaching and healing and talking about love.*

*Some say he's crazy now and some say a prophet,
Some say a poet, who just lost his way.
But I go to see him because somehow he's different;
Something about him says I should stay.*

*So I sit and I listen to the things that he tells me.
Sometimes I think I'm a bit crazy too
Cause I'm thinking about leaving my mama and my papa
Just to follow him and see if it's true.
Just to follow him and see if it's true.*

*I packed me no bags: not even a suitcase.
I left all my cards and the keys to my car.
Walked on the high road and we did us some fishing.
Learned all the lessons that a teacher can teach.*

*I saw a blind man go crazy now when he saw his dear mother;
A cripple go dancing down on Broadway today.
You may think I'm lying: I promise I saw it:
A dead man named Lazarus came out of his grave.*

*But I did not believe, though it was so convincing.
Must be some other answers for the things that go on.
Was it psychosomatic, was he really an addict?
Was she really a virgin? Was there really a whale?
Was she really a virgin now? Was there really a whale?*

*O we got chased out of the USA, so we went up to Jerusalem.
I swear he rode in on a donkey that day.
People called him King Jesus and sang him hosannas.
But often times wonder if somehow he really knew:*

*That the ones who sang loudest were the ones who would kill him
With a bomb in Hiroshima in 1945?
On the balcony of a motel, in a town they call Memphis?
On a hill called Mount Calvary, a long time ago?
On a hill called Mount Calvary, a long time ago.*

*Well I stood there and I cried and he said please forgive him.
It seemed so inappropriate, when you are dying like that.
But he was always that way: you could never predict him.
Never did things the way I wanted him to.
Just like that day, we were all standing around grieving.
Up from the grave he comes walking like that.
None of us knew just quite what to ask him.
So we all stood around and sang alleluia!*

*O alleluia! Alleluia King Jesus!
Up from the grave and back once again.
Never to be quite the same person
That I was on that hillside he called me that day.*

*Now I don't understand all about resurrection.
But there is something alive in me I'm sure once was dead.
I know it was Jesus who came smiling so easy
Saying, "Here is your life, boy, what will you do?
Here is your life: what will you do?"
So here we are in America in all this confusion.
Living our lives the way that we do.
Do you suppose that there's a cost for believing?
Should we keep sailing out on our own?*

*Now I don't really know but some of us might be sleeping:
Taking it easy on the road to who-knows-where.
Don't be misled or take the wrong direction:
There only one Master for all humankind.*

Now I know what you're thinking, "How could you believe it?"

*And I know it sounds crazy, but I'm quite sure it's true.
That the Lord of all Ages, the Universal Neighbor,
Wants you to know: all of love.
Wants you to know all of love.
Wants you to know all of love.*

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Genesis 37:3-8, 17b-22, 26-34 (NRSV)

Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves.

⁴ But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

⁵ Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶ He said to them, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. ⁷ There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words. So Joseph went after his brothers, and found them at Dothan. ¹⁸ They saw him from a distance, and before he came near to them, they conspired to kill him. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. ²⁰ Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; then we shall say that a wild animal has devoured him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams." ²¹ But when Reuben heard it, he delivered him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life." ²² Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but lay no hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand and restore him to his father.

Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? ²⁷ Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. ²⁸ When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

²⁹ When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. ³⁰ He returned to his brothers, and said, "The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?" ³¹ Then they took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. ³² They had the long robe with sleeves taken to their father, and they said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." ³³ He recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." ³⁴ Then Jacob tore his garments, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Genesis 50:15-21 (NRSV)

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶ So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷ 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

I received my very first Bible at Faith United Church of Christ in Bryan, Texas. Red bound leather, it came with a small strip of gold on which my mom wrote my name in cursive into the golden box waiting to bear my name.

I couldn't have been more thrilled to have my very own Bible. That Sunday afternoon, I holed myself in my bedroom and read the story I had always wanted to read cover-to-cover: the story of Joseph, his multicolor coat, his awful brothers who sold him into slavery out of jealousy, his rise to power in Egypt, then the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers many years later.

Found in Genesis 37 to 50, I encourage you to go home this afternoon and read the entire story—only portions of which we have heard in worship today.

Joseph's story is family tragedy and heartbreak more than anything else. Joseph's father, Jacob (often called Israel) was married to two sisters, Rachel and Leah. He loved Rachel the most, but Rachel seemed unable to have children.

Leah, almost as if to spite her sister, was able to have lots and lots of children—particularly sons—which were valued in early Hebrew times. After many years of barrenness and sorrow, Rachel gives birth to Joseph who immediately becomes his father's favorite son.

Joseph himself didn't help matters. Once, he dreamed that his brothers, symbolized as sheaves of grain, bowed down to worship him. And, when Jacob gave his beloved son a gorgeous multi-colored robe to wear, the older brothers had had enough. The scheming brothers threw Joseph into a deep pit until Ishmaelites came along and purchased him as a slave. The brothers then took that gorgeous robe, dipped it in goat blood, taking it back to their father—deceptively telling their father that his favorite son was dead.

Deep family strife. Resentments. Jealousies. Lies. Brokenness upon brokenness upon brokenness found in our Holy Bible before we are even out of Genesis. God's story is just in its infancy, and here we are with 13 entire chapters devoted to the Joseph narrative.

And what about us? Is there discord and jealousies within your own family? Are you living with brokenness between you and your kin? Is there an ancient grudge you are nursing? What is keeping you from a full relationship with your parents, your children, your aunts and uncles, your cousins? How would you name the brokenness in your own family?

We try so hard to put on a happy face—especially concerning our families. We don't want our neighbors and friends to know that we are struggling with our marriage. We wouldn't breathe a word to our cousins that our teenagers are addicted to drugs or in trouble with the law. We barely admit to ourselves the words of hurt that are often tossed about within families.

So instead, when company comes, we pull out the best china, dust the knick knacks and act as if we are not mired in brokenness. It is our society's norm that tells us that if our families are broken, hurting or lost, that we have failed as human beings.

And that cannot be any further from the truth. Every family struggles. Every relationship is strained now and then. And, sometimes, things are downright broken. We don't know where to turn, how to speak of our losses, how to become whole again.

Joseph's story didn't end when he was sold into slavery. In fact, it began again. He was sold into the Pharaoh's household where his gifts, skills, abilities (and yes, his dreams) rose him to a high status among the Egyptians. Now it is true he was jailed for a brief time by being falsely accused, but he found himself back in power, a man of status—yet a man without a homeland.

Then an amazing thing happened. His own brothers—the same ones who sold him into slavery and cast him out as dead—came before their own brother in need. A severe famine had come over the land of his father, in Caanan, leaving his family destitute. The brothers traveled to Egypt, asking for assistance, asking for relief, refugees seeking asylum.

Joseph recognizes his brothers immediately, but they do not recognize the man who holds the future in his hands as their discarded younger brother. At this point, Joseph has a decision to make: will he toy with his brothers, will he cause them suffering as they did to him? Will he treat his brothers vengefully?

At first, it is difficult to tell if Joseph will choose vengeance or reconciliation. He offers to help them, but also asks that they bring back his youngest brother, Benjamin, the only other child of his mother Rachel. He even sets them up for a false accusation of robbery, having Benjamin

arrested. Everything is in place for Joseph to trap his brothers, throw them into jail and exact his revenge.

And what of us? How often do we want revenge? An eye for an eye when we have been injured or someone we love has been harmed? How many years have we nursed old wounds, allowing them to fester? When have we chosen anger (or violence) instead of peace? Families are living organisms of often very hurting hearts—and our confession is that often it is we, ourselves, who are inflicting more harm.

It is at this point that the story turns. Joseph chooses not revenge, but mercy. He tells his brothers who he is. In Chapter 45 we hear him saying, *“I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors.”*

It was that simple and that dramatic: Joseph forgave his brothers.

Rabbi Harold Kushner has written a magnificent volume called Nine Essential Things I've Learned About Life. He spends an entire chapter talking about the power of forgiveness, pointing to Joseph and his brothers as a model we must all have for healing deep divisions within our families.

When imagining WHY Joseph chose to forgive, Rabbi Kushner offers these four possible explanations:

1. First, it may simply be that for Joseph, he does not have the stomach to do to his brothers what was done to him. That he doesn't want to stoop to their level.
2. Second, when Joseph finds himself having to choose between revenge and family, he chose family. He chose to forgive in order that he might have his family back again.
3. Third, according to Rabbi Kushner, the thirst for revenge is not about justice, it is about power. When someone has wronged you, taking away some of your power, our knee-jerk reaction might be to do the same. When we no longer nurse our hardened hearts, when we no longer recount the ways we have been wronged, we are no longer giving the person who wronged us power over us.

By choosing forgiveness, we regain our power—the power to love joyfully and fully.

4. And finally, Rabbi Kushner argues that sometimes the best thing we can do to heal wounds is to apologize. To say, “I’m sorry.” To take responsibility for our actions and words. To take that first step of healing. Years ago, a friend of mine taught at a Lutheran private elementary school. And this was their ritual. When a child did something wrong, they would need to apologize to the person they had wronged. BUT THEN, the person wronged, would respond with, “I forgive you.”

Again: and what about us? What about the brokenness in your family? Are you tired of dragging a wagonload of grudges behind you? Are you ready for a new life, free from anger and revenge?

For here is the amazing thing about the Joseph story. Approximately 1900 years before Jesus, Joseph chose mercy. He chose to turn the other cheek. He chose forgiveness and family.

Now don’t get me wrong: forgiveness is hard work. Healing brokenness in families and friendships and relationships is never a quick-fix. Sometimes professional counselors, pastors, or mediators must be called in to assist. When there has been brokenness and distrust for years, it is difficult to rebuild.

But the choice is yours. You can choose to remain bound to your hurts and grudges OR you can choose the way of forgiveness, the way of love, the way of grace. As followers of Jesus, we are called NOT to seek revenge, but to build bridges. And sometimes the healing can begin with a simple, “I’m sorry. I love you.”

My third grade Bible is falling apart. The spine is almost separated. The leather is cracked. You can barely see my name written by my mother in gold. But this falling apart Bible is a metaphor for our lives. We can focus on the brokenness, the worn away edges, the ugliness. OR, we can look within and see God’s message of peace and reconciliation. For today. For all times. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: Whether we are gathered or scattered, we are a community of people who follow Jesus. We share so much with those early Christians who struggled in the work of the gospel, but also found joy in the Lord, joy in the life they shared together. No matter what we are carrying this day, or what we face, we are not alone. We are invited to share what we have so that others will find the same welcome and the same joy that we have known. 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)

Through our offerings, O God, we identify with the cause of Christ. We proclaim our concern for all people and name them as our own next-of-kin. We identify with their suffering and grief and we rejoice when good comes to them. Both our material resources and our personal time and effort are offered here to extend the Body of Christ into this moment in history and into the whole world. Amen.

Lead On, O King Eternal

C F/C C C/Bb F/A C/G F G

1 Lead on, O King E - ter - nal, the day of march has come;
 2 Lead on, O King E - ter - nal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
 3 Lead on, O King E - ter - nal, we fol - low, not with fears;

G7 C C7 F/C C G/D D7 G

hence-forth in fields of con - quest your tents shall be our home.
 and ho - li - ness shall whis - per the sweet A - men of peace;
 for glad-ness breaks like morn - ing wher - e'er your face ap - pears;

G7 C C7 F A7/E D D7 G

Through days of prep - a - ra - tion your grace has made us strong,
 for not with swords loud clash - ing, nor roll of stir - ring drums,
 your cross is lift - ed o'er us; we jour - ney in its light;

G/F C/E F C7/G F/A F(♯2) F C/G G7 G C

and now, O King E - ter - nal, we lift our bat - tle song.
 with deeds of love and mer - cy the heaven - ly king - dom comes.
 the crown a - waits the con - quest: lead on, O God of might.

*BENEDICTION: Rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ always. Again, I say rejoice. Do not be anxious about anything, so that you may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ to the glory and praise of God. Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Pass the Love*

Pass the Love

J=95

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 95. It consists of four staves of music. The first two staves are in the key of F major. The third and fourth staves are in the key of D minor. Chords are indicated above the notes.

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.

*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

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

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

"No Matter" Words and music by Roger P. Miller ©2007 All rights reserved.

"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.

This arrangement by Rodney Milton, Copyright ©2000. All rights reserved.

Used by Permission. CCLI License #3095528

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are given in loving memory of Ken Henschen by Peg Henschen & Kathy Manbeck.

Meetings- Discipleship Team-Sunday, September 27 at 11:15am in the Sanctuary. Men's Group-Saturday, October 3, 8:00am, Speedway Lanes.

Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions Avg.-107, September 13-Sunday Worship Online-307, In Person-43, Katie Jackson Ordination-In Person-48, Online-373

Blessing Pantry-is open 10am-noon and 1pm-3pm Monday-Friday and 5:30pm-7:30pm Tuesday's **through September 30. Starting October 5,** the Pantry will be located in its original space in the North Hallway and accessible by the North door during these hours - **Monday's & Wednesday's - Friday's 11:30am-4:00pm** and **Tuesday's 11:30am-7:30pm.** The Pantry will be self-serve. **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 through the month of September. Please ring the doorbell, wait outside the doors so staff may assist you. We are currently taking everyone's temperature and asking you to sanitize hands. 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.

Coffee with Pastor Becky-Monday's from 1:30pm to 3:00pm. at NB Coffee Co. All are Welcome!!!!

Opening Day Sunday School/Youth Groups-Due to COVID-19, Sunday School begins Sunday, October 4 in-person and Jr/Sr High Youth Groups begins Wednesday, October 7. Splash (4th/5th grade youth group begins Sunday, October 11. More information should be in your mailbox. Questions??? Please contact Pastor Dee.

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.

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88567175194?pwd=K2FBaGYzRUpaRElwTjc4Q1Y4b3UrUT09> Once you are logged on, you will need the following:

Meeting ID: 885 6717 5194 Passcode: 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=WTIEOTRCeXgrVGoZNgwL056NFIRUT09> Once you are logged on, you will need the following:

Meeting ID: 818 6107 1237 Password: 218178

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

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.

Sunday School and Worship Schedule for October

Sunday's in October-Sunday School will be in person beginning at 9:00am. **Worship**-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 in our daily living. 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 **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.

Warm Winter Coat & Gloves Drive



Agape Ministries will once again be collecting
NEW & GENTLY USED WINTER COATS &
NEW WATER PROOF WINTER GLOVES
for those in need.

Coat Drive Dates: September 21 – November 1.

Drop off Coats to the Agape Client Services Building from 9 am – 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday.

If dropping off at THRIFT STORE, please tell them it is for the coat drive and not to be sold in store.

Items may also be dropped off at St Paul. We will have a designated coat rack available in east hallway of Educational building. Thank you.

WE'RE ALL
IN THIS
Together



Blood Drive **American Legion**

Hall
6458 State Route 66
New Bremen

Monday, October 5
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)
or visit RedCrossBlood.org
and enter: amlegnb to schedule an appointment.



Scan to be directed to
RapidPass®



Scan to schedule
an appointment.

Schedule a blood donation appointment today:

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767