

October 12, 2020

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

Grace and peace to you!

Sunday School and youth programs began last week at St. Paul. Our education building is open for outside groups to meet. It has been so amazing to hear the sound of young voices in our space. We thank you for your support and encouragement during these strange and difficult times.

This week's letter will focus on finances and stewardship. We have noticed that financial giving to St. Paul has actually gone down since we reopened the sanctuary for worship. We would like to reverse this trend. Your financial stewardship to St. Paul has a two-fold purpose:

1. Support of the missions and ministries of St. Paul as we seek to meet the needs of our community, our nation, our world and our own members. Your giving keeps the lights on, offers dynamic on-line and in-person worship, daily devotions, youth programming for all ages, pastoral care to our members, and assistance to any in need.
2. Reflection of our spiritual journeys as we offer our whole lives to God through the Risen Christ. Life itself is a gift from God—we are called to respond to God's gift of life by how we live and how we give.

Each week in this packet, we include an envelope for your financial offering to St. Paul. We encourage you to prayerfully consider giving generously in order that we might serve the community in extravagant ways.


The Blessing Pantry's hours have changed to keep us in compliance with our partnership with West Ohio Food Bank. You and our neighbors can access the Pantry Tuesday evenings from 5:30-7:30 and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 p.m. via the north education building doors.

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.

Again: Thank you for your dedication to St. Paul Church and your dedication to God, our Creator.

Grace and Peace,


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

Financial Information as of October 12, 2020

Operating Fund

Beg. Balance (\$2,974.14)

Giving Income \$14,445.69 (weekly)

Endowment Transfers \$29,519.10(ytd)

Income \$244,289.13 (YTD)

Expenses \$238,962.55 (YTD)

Balance \$2,352.44

Building Maint & Property Care

Beg. Balance \$83,428.04

Income \$12,576.00 (YTD)

Endowment Income \$1,840.22 (YTD)

Expenses \$28,621.04(YTD)

Balance \$69,223.22

Local Aid

Beg. Balance \$9,934.05

Income \$15,199.00(YTD)

Expenses \$17,747.53(YTD)

Balance \$7,385.52

Bless Pantry Inc. \$11,906.16

Bless Pantry Ex.\$10,453.68

Balance \$1452.48

Our Church Wider Mission

Pledge \$30,000.00

Income \$975.00(weekly)

Income \$19,939.00 (YTD)

Project of the Year

Income \$0.00(weekly)

Balance \$2,226.00

OCTOBER 18, 2020
TWENTIETH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



OCTOBER 18, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Open Your Ears,
O Faithful People*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

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

God does great things through people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 22:15-22	The question of paying taxes
Monday	Isaiah 45:1-7	Cyrus serves the Lord
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 1:1-10	The example of faith
Wednesday	Exodus 33:12-23	Moses' intercession
Thursday	Psalms 99	Our Lord is king
Friday	Isaiah 42:1-9	The Lord's servant
Saturday	Psalms 96:1-13	Sing a new song
Sunday	Matthew 22:34-46	Loving God and neighbor

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. **1 Thessalonians 1:2-3 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, use our gifts, our faith, our hope in you, to do labors of love for the sake of Jesus Christ and his reign on earth. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for how you provide for us and for the hands that have brought this food to us today. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who has chosen you in love, give you grace and peace. (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 4)

CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- What is something you have accomplished and are proud of?
- How can God use your efforts—your deeds—for others?
- Is it a surprise that God can use your efforts to accomplish God's will on earth? Explain.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Isaiah 45:1-7.

Cyrus is a Persian king. He is not part of God's chosen people through Abraham, Isaac or Jacob. Cyrus doesn't even know the God of Israel, and yet Cyrus does God's will by setting God's people free to return home from exile in Babylon. Isaiah lifts up the supreme power and authority of God's rule throughout the world. Besides the LORD, there is no god (v. 5). All that is, is God's. It is easy for us to forget that God can use others outside of the body of Christ to do God's will on earth. No wonder Psalm 96 commands all the earth to sing to the LORD (v. 1). In the midst of the tragedies that happen all too often around us, it is important to remember that we are a people of hope and trust in the God who holds all things together. The Apostle Paul wrote with thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' faith, love, and hope (1 Thessalonians 1:3). As a chosen people, Paul gladly affirms that they do God's work of love on earth through their "work of faith" and "steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (v. 3). How does God's rule on earth give you hope and encourage you to act with love and faith?

Pray: **God of power and might, we thank you for your glory that breathes hope and love into all corners of the earth through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

God is the ruler of all of creation and we, God's servants, have responsibility to care for all that God has created. One of the greatest concerns for our world today is to care for the earth that is suffering under the weight of carbon emissions, overflowing landfills and polluted air and water. What can you do to reduce the waste that harms the earth?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalm 96 is a song of praise to God. It tells of the sea roaring, the creatures and fields rejoicing, and the trees singing. In what ways do you praise God through sounds and music? Sing a favorite Christian hymn. Think about what the words say about God. Then say: **Sing a new song to the Lord! Everyone on this earth, sing praises to the Lord, sing and praise his name.** (vv.1-2a)



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THIS IS WHAT GOD'S
KINGDOM IS LIKE:
A BUNCH OF
OUTCASTS AND
ODDBALLS GATHERED
AT A TABLE, NOT
BECAUSE
THEY ARE RICH
OR WORTHY
OR GOOD,
BUT BECAUSE
THEY ARE
HUNGRY,
BECAUSE THEY
SAID YES.
AND THERE'S ALWAYS
ROOM FOR MORE.

+RACHEL HELD EVANS

saltproject.org

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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!!

Welcome! Your presence whether online or in person increases our joy as we praise our loving Savior. May every blessing be yours.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the Church-Covid-19 is a respiratory illness. 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.** 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!

Thank you Sue Harrod for serving in the Nursery Sunday! The Nursery is located on the east end of the south hallway in the educational building.

Restrooms are located in the Narthex/front entrance of the church and in the south hallway of the educational building.

WIFI Connection-connect via "St Paul – Guest"

Password: Godlovesyou

The * indicates all who are able may stand

October 18, 2020
Twentieth 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

$\text{♩} = 120$

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

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

Leader: I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Living God.

People: This is the day when we rejoice in God's act of creation.

Leader: This is our Sabbath, when we rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

People: We give thanks once more. God has brought us to this time of worship that we might refresh one another and be nourished by God's love.

Leader: Let us worship God!

*HYMN OF PRAISE *Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise* verses 1 & 4

48 Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise

G C Am D Em $\frac{G}{D}$ D7 G

1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 To all life thou giv - est, to both great and small;
 4 Great Fa - ther of glo - ry, pure Fa - ther of light,

G C Am D Em $\frac{G}{D}$ D7 G

in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, thou rul - est in might;
 in all life thou liv - est, the true life of all;
 thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight;

G $\frac{D}{F\#}$ G Em $\frac{G}{B}$ D

most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove
 we blos - som and flour - ish as leaves on the tree,
 all praise we would ren - der, O help us to see

G C Am D Em $\frac{G}{D}$ D7 G

al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise.
 thy clouds, which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
 and with - er and per - ish— but naught chang - eth thee.
 'tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee.

***INVOCATION (in unison)**

O God, for the sun and the stars, the mountains and the valleys, we, your children, come to you offering our thanks and seeking your presence. Be among us, opening our hearts to the sway of your power and your peace. We dedicate this service to you. We trust that you will work through our songs and our prayers so that we will leave this place knowing your hand has touched us. Amen.

***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

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: Let God do the Baking!

A show of hands: who likes cookies? Why do you like cookies?

About six years ago, I began baking gingersnaps for the church office cookie jar. I also began delivering plates of cookies to St. Paul folk.

Gingersnaps are delicious, but the separate ingredients don't taste too great: shortening, raw egg, raw flour, baking soda, molasses. Some of the ingredients taste great—like sugar.

Life can be a lot like cookies. Separately there are some bitter times, some raw, some hurtful, some dry and bland times. Falling off a bicycle. The death of a pet or loved one. Times when we are frightened or feel lonely.

But there are also good times! Friends playing together. Christmas morning. Family vacations, a delicious meal.

God is able to blend the good and the bad times in our lives together for our good. All together, they create a life that is meaningful, useful and tasty!

Romans 8:28 has a beautiful promise: *God causes all things to work together for good to those who love him, and are called according to his purpose.*

God does not give us the bad times. God does not make us sick or sad. But God can blend our good and bad together, pop those ingredients into the oven of love and create something delicious that you want to share with others.

Let us pray. God, we thank you for loving us in good times and in bad times. Be with us this coming week, shaping our lives into something that is delicious and beautiful. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN

To What Can the Kingdom of God be Compared

To What Can the Kingdom of God be Compared?

TO GOD BE THE GLORY 11.11.11.11 with refrain ("To God be the Glory")

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of eight staves of music, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score is divided into sections by measure numbers 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 29. The lyrics are as follows:

To what can the king - dom of God be com - pared? A
A small bit of lea - ven will change the whole bread; A
5 While some look for treas - ure or one price - less pearl, God's
must - ard seed falls where a field's been pre - pared, And there, where pre -
poor wo - man sees that her neigh - bors are fed, A church rea - ches
10 reign is the gift wise ones seek in this world. A girl sells poss -
dict - a - ble plant - ings should be, There grows up a wild bush, - as
out to the youth in the town, A man shares his faith and God's
15 ess - ions to help those in need; A boy choos - es faith - ful - ness
big as a tree! God of love, here on earth, hid - den things still sur -
bless - ings a - bound. God of love, here on earth, hid - den things still sur -
20 rath - er than greed. God of love, here on earth, hid - den things still sur -
prise; Lov - ing deeds... signs of birth... faith - ful, Spi - rit - filled lives. Your
prise: Lov - ing deeds... signs of birth... faith - ful, Spi - rit - filled lives. Your
25 prise: Lov - ing deeds... signs of birth... faith - ful, Spi - rit - filled lives. Your
reign is a - maz - ing, your ways still as - tound, Just
reign is a - mong us, cre - a - tion is blessed, When
29 reign is a trea - sure that wise ones pur - sue; May
like that new life spring - ing forth from the ground.
e - ven a few faith - ful lives change the rest.
we seek your king - dom in all that we do.

Biblical Reference: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Tune: William Howard Doane, 1875 ("To God Be the Glory")

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Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Cindy Newman's cancer-free diagnoses. **Birth Candles** welcome twins Bree Marie & Quinn Lashay Schott born October 6, 2020 to Sierra & Cody Schott. They are the sisters of Colten & Jayden. **Wedding** congratulations to Joel Hemmelgarn and Hannah Holdren who were united in marriage Saturday, October 17, 2020.

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Deb Lear, Julie Vogel, Jan Dammeyer, Drew Wray, Ron Bertke and Pastor Dee Schroer.

Please remember the family of Kevin Hines (Pastor Dee's uncle) in your prayers. Kevin passed away Thursday, October 8, 2020.

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

Most Gracious God, you have given us the gifts which we know through the moving strains of music, through a smile and a tear, a sigh and a shout, through laughter and weeping, a prayer, silence, the beauty of such a day and place...God, for these gifts and the meaning of them for each of us, know our gratitude and our expressions of praise.

We pray for the church—sometimes triumphant and present, while at other times, seeming to be failing and distant. Sometimes we are able to be together and other times we are the Body of Christ virtually from our kitchen tables. We confess that there are times when we are scattered and divided: torn and hurting, afraid and self-righteous. Sometimes we are truly serving, while at other times we demand and want only to be served. Sometimes we are filled with your Spirit, which enlivens, empowers, and transforms, while at other times we are only a skeleton that settles for what is—afraid and yes, lazy. Holy One, your Spirit catches us, fills us, and frees us. Help us to be your church, to appreciate the gifts which we are given and share them gratefully that there may be a stronger, serving, empowering and transforming body in the world: your church!

Bless, dear God, this particular congregation and the worldwide church of which we are part. We pray for unity among Christians. We pray for the healing of breaches. We pray for peace where misunderstanding, violence, and prejudice try to have the final word.

We pray for our nation, O God, divided and hurting in so many ways. Remind us again that our perceived enemies are your beloved children.

Open our eyes that we might see Christ Jesus walking among us as the beggar, the crying child, the lonely elder.

We pray for our world—this one in which we live: one in which there is abundance and yet scarcity, one in which there is food, yet hungry people, one in which there is healing, and yet virus, disease and addiction. We pray for the world which you so love that you sent us Jesus to trust and follow that there might be life and freedom forever.

Gentle God, you know the particular concerns that lie heaviest in our hearts and minds. Receive these, our silent prayers, as we offer them to you. SILENCE

God of Grace and God of Glory—we thank you for the gift of this moment to offer to you our thanks and praise. Be with us as we navigate the coming days as your beloved children.

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

Great Is the Lord

(YouTube Search: Michael W. Smith *Great Is the Lord*)

*Great is the Lord
He is holy and just
By His power we trust
In His love*

*Great is the Lord
He is faithful and true
By His mercy He proves
He is love*

*Great is the Lord
And worthy of glory
Great is the Lord
And worthy of praise*

*Great is the Lord
Now lift up your voice
Now lift up your voice
Great is the Lord
Great is the Lord
Great is the Lord,
He is holy and just
By His power we trust
In His love*

*Great is the Lord
He is faithful, and true
By His mercy He proves
He is love*

*Great is the Lord
And worthy of glory
Great is the Lord
And worthy of praise
Great is the Lord
Now lift up your voice
Now lift up your voice
Great is the Lord
Great is the Lord*

*Great are you Lord
And worthy of glory
Great are you Lord
And worthy of praise
Great are you Lord
I lift up my voice
I lift up my voice
Great are you Lord
Great are you Lord*

After they had eaten and drunk at Shiloh, Hannah rose and presented herself before the Lord. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord, and wept bitterly. ¹¹ She made this vow: “O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head.”

They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. ²⁰ In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, “I have asked him of the Lord.”

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: 1 Samuel 2:1-10

(NRSV)

Hannah prayed and said,

*“My heart exults in the Lord;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in my victory.*

² *“There is no Holy One like the Lord,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.*

³ *Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.*

⁴ *The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.*

⁵ *Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.*

*The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.*

⁶ *The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.*

*⁷ The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.*

*⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.*

*For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.*

*⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.*

*¹⁰ The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed."*

RESPONSE

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

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

SERMON

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Today's narrative lectionary scriptures tell part of the story of Hannah. I'll be honest. I know the story of Samuel, Hannah's son, much better than Hannah's story. So, I did some digging for today's sermon and this is what I learned:

Hannah was the second wife to Elkanah. Like the story of Rachel and Leah a few weeks ago, Hannah was barren and the other wife, Peninnah, was not. And, like the story two weeks ago in which we learned that Jacob loved barren Rachel more than fertile Leah, we hear in scripture that Elkanah loved Hannah the most.

Every year Elkanah would offer a sacrifice at the sanctuary at Shiloh. Keep in mind, that before the Temple was built by the Jews in Jerusalem, there were other sites for the ancient Hebrews to gather and worship. The city of Shiloh was one of them.

Elkanah would take his wives and his children with Peninnah to Shiloh for the sacrifices. He would give Peninnah and her children portions to sacrifice at the altar, but he always gave his beloved Hannah a double portion.

Today's reading picks up at one of those times Elkanah, Peninnah and Hannah were worshiping at Shiloh. Eli, the priest, was sitting near the entrance to the Temple and overheard Hannah's bitter tears about her barrenness and the promise she made with the Lord. Basically, she bargained with God: if he would give her a son, she would offer him to the Temple. And, in her prayer of bargaining, she promised to raise her (yet unconceived son) as a nazirite.

And what, is a nazirite? A nazirite, in ancient Hebrew tradition was someone who abstained from wine, wine vinegar, grapes and raisins. He also refrained from cutting the hair on his head. And more than that—he could comb his hair with his fingers, but never groom his hair with a comb since a comb might pull out some of the hair. And, interestingly, a nazirite must also avoid corpses and graves even those of family members. Basically, this was to keep the nazirite from being ritually impure.

According to Numbers chapter 6, a person could declare himself to be a nazirite. Also according to Numbers, a nazirite was considered "holy unto the Lord." A FATHER could also declare a son to be one, but a mother could not (yet we know that is exactly what Hannah does). Hannah so wants a child, that she is willing to say and do anything.

The piece of the story that is missing from our reading today is the priest Eli's response to overhearing Hannah's prayer. She was so upset, so wrought, when she prayed that Eli approached her, asking her if she was drunk. She assured the priest that she was not—but that she desperately wanted a child. Eli, touched by her sincerity, promised that her prayer would be answered.

And what of us? I suspect each and every one of us has hit rock bottom spiritually, emotionally or physically at some point in our lives, driven to our knees in prayer. And, like Hannah, I suspect each of us at some point in our lives has tried bargaining with God. As in "God, if you stop this from happening or make this happen, I promise I will do X"

A historical example of someone bargaining with God was Reformer Martin Luther. Martin Luther's father, who worked as a miner, wanted his son to become a lawyer, so Martin studied law. He was almost done with his studies, when one day at the age of 21, he was caught outside in the midst of a violent thunderstorm. In the midst of his fear, Luther cried out to St. Anna, the patron saint of miners, "Save me, Saint Anna, and I shall become a monk!" God spared young Martin, and he kept his vow, to the great disappointment of his father and his mother.

So I wonder: Is it OKAY to bargain with God? At first blush, bargaining with God seems a bit unseemly—like we are telling God how he should respond to our crisis. Like we know better than God what is good for us. Like we can dictate to God what should happen in our lives.

But then I pause and wonder again: Does God judge against us by how poorly, ineptly, fumblingly we pray? I doubt it. I believe God loves us so extravagantly that even our less-than-perfect prayers are encouraged. Just like parents of small children—we don't punish our toddlers for getting words wrong when learning to speak, I do not believe God punishes us for praying in metaphorically toddler ways.

Tanya Lurhmann, a New York Times columnist, wrote a book in 2012 about prayer entitled "When God Talks Back: Understanding the American Evangelical Relationship with God." In her text, she says that three out of five Americans surveyed say they pray every day. And that for many of these Americans, prayer is more conversational than anything else. An engagement with God, a deepening of a relationship with the Holy One. Part of Tanya's research looked at how Christians in America from different cultural backgrounds (such as Africa and India) see prayer. What she discovered is this: European Americans have a hard time believing that God speaks to them—even in prayer.

So I ask you today: we say that God is still speaking in our lives, but have you ever experienced (in prayer or otherwise), God's voice, God's whisper, God's word spoken directly to you, to your need, and into your life?

Hannah most certainly did experience God speaking to her in response to her prayers. In due time, our reading for today tells us, she became pregnant and gave birth to Samuel. The scriptures also tell us that she kept Samuel with her until he was weaned (which, according to

most scholars is less about breastfeeding and more about raising him. It is speculated that Samuel was given to the Temple in the care of the priest Eli somewhere between the ages of 6 and 12.)

And this we also know from today's readings: that when Samuel was born, Hannah's prayers became ones of thanksgiving and praise. Our entire second reading is Hannah's prayer of joy. She lifts her prayers to God who is her Rock and her strength. But then Hannah's prayer takes a somewhat political bent: her prayer speaks of God as one who girds the feeble with strength, feeds the hungry, lifts up the needy.

Over a thousand years before Jesus walked on earth, Hannah's prayer of joy acknowledges that the God we worship is on the side of the poor, the oppressed, the barren, the hungry. God, when he came to live among us in Jesus, reinforced this message. A reminder that God is less interested in the prosperity of our lives and more interested in how we treat those on the margins of life. As Christians, we are called to listen and heed Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving. As Christians, we are called to care for, what Jesus calls, the least of these. As Christians, we need to look for the face of Jesus not only in our bedtime prayers, but in the way we live our lives while awake.

And the promise is sure: God will be with us—loving us, forgiving us, challenging us to share his love. We are not alone. And, when we give ourselves completely to God—no longer begging for this, that, or the other, but simply allowing God to speak a new word for us, amazing things happen. Prayers get answered in surprising ways. Broken relationships are mended. We begin to seek out ways to serve others. Our God is an extravagant God—extravagant in love, in grace, in acceptance. When we place our full trust in him, our world opens up in completely unexpected (and awesome ways)

So, how did things end for Hannah? The Book of Numbers tells us that husbands had the authority to nullify the vows/promises/prayers of their wives, but we know that Elkinah did not. Samuel, once he was of an appropriate age, was raised by Eli in the Temple.

But there is a piece to Hannah's story I bet you don't know. If we were to read a bit further in 1 Samuel 2, we would hear this: that after Samuel's birth, she bore three more sons and two daughters.

When Hannah bargained with God that day in the Temple, she had no idea the extravagance of God's answer.

So, my dear ones: listen for the Lord. Let go of what you expect of God and be ready for a life of trust and hope. For your prayers will be answered and they will be answered in surprising, abundant and life-filled ways. Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING INVITATION: We are living, breathing messages of God's love for the world. This is our work of faith and our labor of love and our steadfastness of hope in Jesus Christ. Like the earliest Christians, we are here because of the commitment and faith and generosity of others who shared the good news of the gospel in their time. So we turn now, in our own time, and share our faith and our commitment through generous giving to support the ministry of this church in Christ's name. 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)

Lord, forgive our fears that stifle our stewardship. Forgive our giving in and our giving up instead of giving ourselves to Christ's mission of love. Remind us that our hope is in standing up and risking. Help us remember, O God, that the stewardship question is not really, "How much will we give?" The stewardship question is, "How will we spend what we have been given?" We pray it will be faithfully and cheerfully. Amen.

*HYMN OF SENDING *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* verses 1 & 4

719 Go, My Children, with My Blessing

F F/A Bb F/A Gm Gm/Bb C F/A Bb2 Bb Am/C C7 F

1 Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, nev-er a-lone.
 2 Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure.
 3 Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, clos-er to me;
 4 I, the Lord, will bless and keep you and give you peace;

F F/A Bb F/A Gm Gm/Bb C F/A Bb2 Bb Am/C C7 F

Wak-ing, sleep-ing, I am with you; you are my own.
 Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
 grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy-ful and free.
 I, the Lord, will smile up-on you and give you peace:

Bb/D F Bb/D F/A Bb Cm Bb/D F Gm F/A Gm/Bb Dm Gm9 Gm/Bb

In my love's bap-tis-mal riv-er I have made you mine for
 Here you heard my dear Son's sto-ry; here you touched him, saw his
 Here my Spir-it's pow-er filled you; here his ten-der com-fort
 I, the Lord, will be your Fa-ther, Sav-ior, Com-fort-er, and

F/C C F/A Bb F/A Gm Gm/Bb C F/A Bb2 Bb Am/C C7 F

ev-er. Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing— you are my own.
 glo-ry. Go, my chil-dren, sins for-giv-en, at peace and pure.
 stilled you. Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, joy-ful and free.
 Broth-er. Go, my chil-dren, I will keep you and give you peace.

*BENEDICTION: Friends, go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good and render to no one evil for evil. Strengthen the fainthearted. Support the weak. Help the afflicted. Honor all people. Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE *Pass the Love*

Pass the Love

♩=95

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

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

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

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

Fmaj7 Dm F/G F/C

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

Am7 Dm7 Gm7 F/C C7 F

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

*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: The Peace of Christ be with you!

People: And also with you!

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 memory of Loved Ones by Myra and Mike Hanenkratt

Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions Avg.-77, October 4-Sunday Worship Online-222, In Person-51, Sunday School-26 students, 7 teachers, October 7-Confirmation-12 students, 3 leaders. Jr High Youth-4, Sr High Youth-4, 3 leaders.

Meetings: Worship Team-Sunday, October 18, 2020 at 11:15am.

Blessing Pantry-is located in its original space in the North Hallway and accessible by the North door during these hours - **Tuesdays 5:30pm-7:30pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays 1:00pm-3:00pm**. The Pantry will be closed Mondays and Fridays. **All Donations Welcome - Thank you!** There is a metal can outside the East Educational Building door for donations.

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 air on our Facebook page St. Paul United Church of Christ-New Bremen, OH.

Coffee with Pastor Becky-Monday's from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. at NB Coffee Co. All are Welcome!!!!

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.

October Monthly Mission: Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the U.S. One third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church justice issues that affect American Indian life. Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with different tribes in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and Nebraska. There are now 20 UCC churches on reservations. There are many Indians who are members of other UCC churches and CAIM also supports these churches and pastors.

Two thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries in the US. (JWM) supports a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. NIN grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. **In the last two years our own St. Paul received a grant for \$5000.00 from NIN for our Community Garden and for the annual Art Camp.** This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities throughout the US. Please support this all UCC Mission project for the month of October. Thank you for your generous support of another UCC Mission. The Mission Team.

Veteran's Recognition: November 8-Military veterans and active duty personnel will be honored at the beginning of the worship services November 9 and 10. Since, we plan to list the names of veterans and active duty folk from St. Paul UCC in the bulletin that Sunday, please call or email the church office to give us your name and service branch. 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



KEEPING YOUR COMMUNITY WARM

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.