

November 2, 2020

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

Grace and peace to you as we set aside time this month to thank the Living God for the many blessings he pours into our lives!

As you may have heard announced in worship this past Sunday, Pastor Becky and Jim Strang are in quarantine for 14 days—they were exposed to Covid19 the week prior. While Becky will not be in the office, she will continue to work fulltime from the parsonage dining room.

This past Sunday, our stewardship theme was “Tithing:” a reminder that God asks of us to joyfully give back to him a portion of which he has entrusted us. Included in this mailing is a tithing chart. We encourage you to prayerfully consider taking a leap of faith in your financial support of St. Paul’s many ministries and missions.

This coming Sunday, we welcome the Rev. David Long-Higgins to worship. Dave is the Transitional Conference Minister of the Heartland (formerly Ohio) Conference. Plan to welcome Dave and his wife, Beth, when you see them on Sunday.

Looking ahead, the Discipleship Team and the New Bremen/New Knoxville Rotary are hosting a Community Thanksgiving Dinner on Monday, November 23. While there will be no dine-in eating, meals will be delivered and you have the opportunity to pick up meals on the Herman Street side of our education building between 5:00-6:00 p.m. that day.

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.

The church office will be closed on Friday afternoons. Please contact us prior to noon on Fridays.

As the numbers of those infected with Covid19 in our area continue to rise, we pray for your health and safety and that of our neighbors. Be well!

Grace and Peace,



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

Financial Information as of November 2, 2020 is not available

Hanging of the Greens will take place on Sunday, November 22, after church. We are looking for volunteers to help with decorating of the Sanctuary and Chapel for the Advent Season. Thank you!

It is time to place your orders for the poinsettia plants that grace our sanctuary during the Christmas season. The poinsettias are 6½-inch wrapped in foil with a drip pan. We are offering the choice of Red or White and the cost per plant will be \$10.00.

The plants may be picked up **after the 11:00pm, Thursday, Christmas Eve** worship service.

(Please be sure to pick up the color you ordered so that everyone will be able to enjoy the color of the plant that each chose.)

Poinsettia color choice and quantity:

Red _____ Qty White _____ Qty

In memory of _____

A gift for _____

By _____

I wish to contribute \$ _____ to the Christmas Decorating Fund.

Please place payment along with the order form in the offering plate or drop off in the church office. Checks should be payable to St. Paul UCC.

Please have poinsettia order in by December 5.

Every year at this time we also ask for and accept donations to the Christmas Decorating Fund. This money will be used toward decorations for the Church and Educational Building.

Please include payment with this order form.

Thank you for helping make our sanctuary even more beautiful as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

NOVEMBER 8, 2020
TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking faith home

Be alert and be glad for the Lord is coming.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 25:1-13	A parable of the ten bridesmaids
Monday	Amos 5:18-24	What the Lord requires
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 4:13-18	The coming of the Lord
Wednesday	Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25	The tribes renew the covenant
Thursday	Psalms 78:1-7	Tell the children God's word
Friday	Luke 21:29-37	Be always on the watch
Saturday	Psalms 70	God is wonderful
Sunday	Matthew 25:14-30	Parable of the talents

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. Let those who love your salvation say evermore, "God is great!" **Psalm 70:4 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Righteous God, help us to be ready for the time Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead and to anticipate the end of the age with joy. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, help us to receive this food with thanksgiving and to serve those less fortunate with acts of love and service. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who promises you the great banquet feast bless you with peace and joy now and always.



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NOVEMBER 8, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*God of Grace and
God of Glory*

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:

- Tell or think about something that you do with focused attention.
- How does paying attention help you do your best?
- Jesus wants his followers to stay alert and be ready for his coming. How is this important to you and to others?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 25:1-13.

This parable seems harsh. We might think we are to have mercy on the foolish and not lock them out. A more merciful approach is evident in the next chapter when Jesus' leadership team of disciples falls asleep while Jesus prays in the garden (26:36-46). Jesus chastises them without a sense of rejection. In this parable the church is reminded to live with the final victory of God in Christ in view. It is to impact our daily lives as we wait for Christ's second coming. However, unless there is a particular experience of suffering, we tend to live without paying much attention to Christ's coming again. Jesus is alerting his followers to the importance of watchfulness of the times and readiness to act faithfully at any given moment. That is when the church blesses, serves with justice, and offers salvation in Jesus' name. How might a conscious awareness of Christ's victory and return to "judge the living and the dead" (Apostles' Creed), impact your daily conduct?

Pray: Come Lord Jesus, strengthen our lives of faith that we may anticipate your coming again with joy and serve our neighbor in love. Amen.

SERVICE

According to Amos, worship without acts of justice for the needy is meaningless to God. During and after a worship service, take time to think about how God's acts of love and mercy for you and all humanity lead you to do acts of kindness and love for others.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The foolish bridesmaids in the parable did not have additional oil for their lamps. The light in their lamps could not shine. They were not ready. It is important to be ready and let the light of Jesus' love shine. We can do this by being ready to do God's work everyday. One way to be ready is to pray for others, read scripture, and bless others. Use this blessing daily during this week: **May the light of Christ shining through you show your readiness to do God's work.**



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

taking faith home



Milkweed Pod/Sacrificial Giving
Photo by Becky Erb Strang

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!!

Welcome, one and all, to this time of worship. We are blessed, whether online or in person, to have you with us today.

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 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 Ragan Miller 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

WE HONOR OUR VETERANS

ARMY

Tim Bowers
Dennis Bushman
Don Dammeyer
Dennis Dicke
Melvin Fledderjohann
Bob Fontanini
Tina Fontanini
Dennis Hainline
Brenda Haynes
Dean Heitkamp
Dick Howell
Dick Hudson
John Knost
Jim Moeller (Army Air Corps)
Robert Paul
Kris Poppe
Dale Quellhorst
Lowell Quellhorst
Stan Quellhorst
Dale Schaefer
Don Scheer
Lloyd Schroer
Jim Tontrup
Ron Tontrup
Bill Tostrick

ARMY

Richard Watcke
George Weiss

MARINES

Adam Leshner

AIR FORCE

Tom Brandewie (National Guard)
Roland Dicke
Matt Longfellow

NAVY

Genevieve Conradi
Larry Kuhn
Ralph Plattner
Jacob Wagner

NATIONAL GUARD

John Gilberg (Army)
Dale Heitkamp(Army)

ACTIVE DUTY

Cole Hemmelgarn (Navy)
LCDR Phillip Krites(Navy)
Levi Leshner (National Guard)
Max Messick(Coast Guard)
Zachery Nelson (Marines)
Lucas Poppe(Army)
Alan Topp(Navy)
Brian Wenning(Army-Active Reserve)

November 8, 2020
Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost
Stewardship: Sacrificial Giving
Veteran's Recognition

Worship Leaders

Ministers	The Congregation
Rev. Becky Erb Strang	Senior Pastor
Pastor Dee Schroer	Associate Pastor
Rev. David Long-Higgins	Transitional Conference Minister
	Heartland Conference
Cheyenne Olt	Accompanist/Vocalist
Richard Hudson	Organist

The * indicates all who are able may stand

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

VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY RECOGNITION Roland Dicke

We Remember All Those: A Prayer for Veterans Day

One: Let us Pray. Loving God, the framers of our Declaration of Independence claimed that you have endowed us with inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet there are those who would take these from us.

Today we remember all those who have served in our country's armed forces to preserve the freedoms you have granted us, to make it impossible for those who would take away our freedoms from prevailing.

One: For the men and women who serve in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: For the family members who have made great sacrifices in order to make it possible for their service members to be on watch at home or around the world or to go into harm's way,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: For the families who grieve the death of a member who went in harm's way, never to return,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: Jesus tells us that no one has greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. For all those veterans who have been willing to lay down their lives for us,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: For the veterans of past wars who bear scars in their bodies and spirits,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: For veterans who came home but couldn't "fit in" with their families or communities anymore,

People: We ask your blessing.

One: Keep all our veterans in your care today. Grant them the peace they sought to preserve for others. As we honor our veterans, we also pray for peace. Teach all your people the ways of peace that those who have sacrificed so much for peace and freedom will not have done so in vain. We pray all these things in the name of your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

*WELCOME SONG

No Matter

No Matter

$\text{♩} = 120$

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

To verses | Last time, Fine

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us.

People: A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alones decides which gift each person should have.

All: Let us worship God!

*HYMN OF PRAISE

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

verses 1 & 4

My Country, 'Tis of Thee

731

F Gm Bb C F Dm Gm Bb F/C C7 Dm

1 My coun - try, 'tis of thee, sweet land of lib - er - ty,
 2 My na - tive coun - try, thee, land of the no - ble free,
 3 Let mu - sic swell the breeze, and ring from all the trees
 4 Our fa - thers' God, to thee, Au - thor of lib - er - ty,

Gm Bb F C F C7

of thee I sing: land where my fa - thers died, land of the
 thy name I love; I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and
 sweet free-dom's song: let mor - tal tongues a - wake, let all that
 to thee we sing: long may our land be bright with free-dom's

C7 F/C C F C7/G F/A Bb F/C C7 F

pil - grims' pride, from ev - ery moun - tain - side let free - dom ring!
 tem - pled hills; my heart with rap - ture thrills like that a - bove.
 breathe par - take; let rocks their si - lence break, the sound pro - long.
 ho - ly light; pro - tect us by thy might, great God, our King!

WORDS: Samuel F. Smith (1808-1895)
 MUSIC: *Thesaurus Musicus*, 1744

AMERICA
 6.6.4.6.6.6.4.

*INVOCATION (in unison)

We thank you, God, that you have spoken to people of faith at many times and in various ways, and that in Jesus, your living Word, you have revealed yourself among us. We come longing once more to know your presence and to hear your Word. We come eager to follow Jesus. We rejoice that you are with us always when we gather in Christ's name. Amen.

*HALLELUJAH!

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl

Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jahl Hal - le -

lu - jahl Hal - le - lu - jahl

CHILDREN'S MOMENT: SHINE!

Shine a flashlight in your own face. When a bright light shines on our faces, we know it. When God's light shines on us, people can see God in us.

But there's more: if we were to shine God's light onto a mirror—the light bounces somewhere else—maybe on someone else. God's light can also shine upon us when we act as mirrors—bouncing that light onto others.

This week, think about ways you can shine God's light. Think also about how you can reflect God's light onto others. Some examples: kind words, loving actions, forgiveness, reaching out to someone who is lonely.

HYMN

If I Have Two Coats

If I Have Two Coats

1 If I have two coats, God calls me to share;
 2 If I have some bread— and soup, all the more—
 3 If mon - ey is mine, God calls me to live
 4 O God of great truth, John's call to o - bey

there's some - one near - by with no coat to wear.
 I'm called to reach out with some - one who's poor.
 as some - one who loves to gen - erous - ly give.
 pre - pared us for Christ, who shows us your Way.

And if I don't know who that per - son might be,
 And if I don't know who that per - son might be,
 And if I don't know some - one suff - ering near me,
 May we have the cour - age to try some - thing new,

it's to a new friend - ship that God's call - ing me.
 it's to a new tab - le that God's call - ing me.
 it's to a new neigh - bor that God's call - ing me.
 to reach to new neigh - bors and so wel - come you.

Biblical Reference: Luke 3:7-18

Tune: LYONS 10.10.11.11 ("O Worship the King, All Glorious Above"); attr. Johann Michael Haydn (1737-1806); arr. William Gardiner, *Sacred Melodies* (London: 1815)

Alternate Tune: HANOVER ("Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim")

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Email: begillette@comcast.net New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys: Worshipping Together

Concerns: We are continuing to pray for Bob Eilerman (St. Rita's), Janet Eilerman, Teresa Joyce, Deb Lear, Jan Dammeyer, Drew Wray, and Pastor Dee Schroer.

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

Holy and life-giving God, we lift up to you today your church around the world: that its communities of faith may proclaim your good news and bring reconciliation and healing to this earth. May we be instruments of your hope to others. SILENCE

We lift up to you the diversity of the Body of Christ—Christians in our community, Christians in our country and Christians around the world. May each know the power of the living Christ and serve you with faithful discipleship. SILENCE

We lift up to you our country: that our leaders might govern wisely and with compassion. That we, as citizens, may act lovingly toward one another and for the common good. SILENCE

We pray for all families in all its forms. Be with children and their parents, grandparents and loved ones. May the ties that bind us together be strengthened by your grace and tenderness. We pray for the strengthening of our human relationships. SILENCE

We lift up in prayer those who are in trouble or danger: that regardless of circumstance they may find hope and release; that they may know they are not alone, but abide in you. We pray for those weighed down by life's many burdens. SILENCE

We pray today for all who are sick, those who are injured, those who are recuperating. We pray also for all who are mourning the loss of a loved one. Pour your comforting and healing Spirit upon each. SILENCE

O God, you know the deepest yearnings of our hearts. Take these yearnings and use them to work your perfect will in the life of the world. Shape our lives according to our prayers. SILENCE Amen.

ANTHEM The Lord's Prayer (YouTube Search: The Lord's Prayer in Aramaic (Abun d'beschmayo))

West Syriac melody



A - bun d'bashmayo ne - th - qa - da - sh sh'-mokh, ti - the ma - l' - ku-thokh,
Our Father in heaven hal - low-ed be thy name, may it come your king - dom,



ne - h' - we - se - b' - yo - nokh, ay - ka - no d' ba - sh' - ma - yo,
may be done your will, just as it is in heav'n,



a - f' bar - 'o ha - b' - lan la - h - mo d' - su - n' - qo - nan
so on earth and give us bread of our needs



yow - mo - no, wa - sh' - bu - q' lan haw - bayn wa - h' - to - hayn ay -
day by day, and for give us our sins and our debts,



-ka - no do - f' h' - nan shba - qan l' ha - yo - bayn
just as we for give those who sin a - gainst us.



lo ta' lan l' - ne - s - yu - no, e - lo fa - so lan
Lead us not in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - li - ver - us



me - n' bi - sho - me - tul d'di - lokh hi ma - l' - ku - tho w' -
from e - vil. For yours is the king - dom



-hay - lo w' - the - sh - bu - h' - to, l'o - la - m' o - l' - min a - min.
and the pow - er and the glo - ry, for e - ver and for e - ver, a - men.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 58:3-9

(NRSV)

³ "Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today

will not make your voice heard on high.

*⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?*

*⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?*

*⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*

*⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*

*⁹ Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,*

RESPONSE

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

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

SERMON

“To Be Fully Alive”

Rev. David Long-Higgins

I want to begin this morning by saying what a delight it is to be with you, friends. Thanks Pastor Becky and all of you for the kind invitation which, though delayed by COVID 19, has not finally been denied. It is a kind of motion in life that is very much at the heart of our scripture text this morning and our exploration of the theme of sacrificial giving. More about that in just a moment.

But first I would like to bring you a little update about the Conference by way of bringing greetings to you and also a word of deep thanks. Together in the Conference we are in a season of midwifing new ways to be ever more collaborative and mutually strengthening. God has set before us as the Heartland Conference a vision of life where together in Christ's love, we collaborate to reconcile and restore all of God's creation.

Of course, this is not work done on our own. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to connect, equip and support our faith communities to grow as faith disciples and responsible stewards, following Jesus' call to extravagantly love all God's children and creation.

One of the signs of this new chapter into which we are living into has to do with a name change for the conference that helps to frame theologically and spiritually the work that God is doing in our midst. That new name is you probably now know is the Heartland Conference and is based on this passage from Ezekiel 11:19: "I will give them one heart and put a new spirit within them."

I want to take just a moment to bring greetings from your relatives. As the Transitional Conference Minister, it is my great honor and privilege to bring you greetings from the 338 other congregations which make up the Heartland Conference of the United Church of Christ, which you may know includes two congregations in West Virginia and seven in Northern Kentucky just across the river from Cincinnati.

I also bring you greetings from our General Minister and President Rev. John Dorhauer and Associate General Ministers Rev. Traci Blackmon in Justice and local church ministries, and the Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister for Global Ministries. I also bring you greetings on behalf of our global ministry with nearly 300 partners in 90 countries around the world who share in our response to the commission of Jesus Christ to meet all God's people at the place of deepest need. Even more I bring you greetings from my home church, Zion UCC in Delaware, Ohio, and my pastor, the Rev. Beth Gedert.

If you haven't quite caught on, you and I are in a web of blessing and mutual encouragement and support that daily changes the lives of people near and far. Your gifts to Our Churches Wider Mission make these life-giving connections possible – right here in Ohio and around the world.

I know that you are a five for five congregation in the UCC. If you don't know what that means it means that as a congregation in addition to OCWM you have given to disaster relief through One Great Hour of Sharing. In the past year, together we have been a presence in the recovery efforts following the tornados in the wider Dayton area where it will likely take five years for full recovery.

Whether you know it nor not, new churches are getting established and older churches renewing through your support of our Strengthen the Church offering. You have supported and encouraged our Native American Congregations and helped advocate for a world in which all may flourish through Neighbors in Need.

You have been supporting our retired pastors and their spouses through the Christmas Fund who served faithfully in smaller congregations and struggle now in retirement to make ends meet.

So I say, thank you from the bottom of my heart, dear friends, for your faithfulness to this mission of love which we share together near and far. Now this is about more than just money. These gifts are about an energy and capacity for love to become real in the life of the world right where you live and throughout the world because that is the commission of Jesus Christ. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As I said earlier, I am the Transitional Conference Minister for the Heartland Conference of which we are all a part. But the truth is that we are all transitional conference ministers. Because to live the Christian life is to be in a season of transformation from one thing that we know to a deeper reality to which God invites so that our joy and the joy of the world may be more and more full so that the peace of the world may grow.

I am guessing you have noticed, as I have, that life does not pause in one spot. It is we might say, relentlessly on the move - often times between that which is familiar and that which takes us into the unknown and back again, but never to exactly same place. We know that reality well in these days of COVID 19, do we not?

It is the place where we find the Israelites in our reading from the Prophet Isaiah this morning. As I mentioned earlier, our text this morning comes from what scholars often refer to as "Third Isaiah" – that time after the 70 years of exile in Babylon when the people have finally gotten the chance to return to their homeland. One would think that now that they

are back in the familiar all would be well. The temple has been rebuilt, the ancient practices have been re-engaged, all should be smooth sailing from this point forward, right?

But apparently not. Apparently 70 years of exile and just plain old inertia and fatigue, even though you've come home, will cause learning to fade and old habits to re-emerge – allowing the stuff that carried the people into exile in the first place to get forgotten like some kind of amnesia caused by the familiar. So, there is a disconnect going on. The people notice it and so does God.

The people wonder out loud, “Why do fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” They could have said, “Come on God, do your part here. We are skipping some meals on your behalf – surely you could meet us half-way.”

And God responds through the prophet, “Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look you fast only to quarrel and fight and to strike with a wicked fist.” God notices something: The outward practices are being engaged, but their hearts have not been opened. The people are at risk of engaging life in the way their ancestors did just prior to being taken into exile.

Then, just in case the people have missed the point, the prophet gets specific. *“Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.”*

Now you may have noticed that there are a couple of gems hidden inside this word that comes from the prophet - all of which have to do with our discovery of what it means to be fully alive.

First a word about it means to break the bonds of injustice - which is one of the most persistent themes in the Bible. Or maybe it would be better said in the positive, “What does the justice of God look like? Of course, no definition will be finally adequate. Sometimes we might think of justice as simple fairness. This is a common understanding. But the prophetic vision goes far deeper.

Justice is the ongoing work toward an arrangement of life where all God's children can freely use their gifts without fear for the upbuilding of the common good and the good of creation, so that all may share in God's abundance and joy. Justice is at the heart of what it means to be fully alive.

To be fully alive, means to have our hearts broken open by the suffering of others in such a way that we are moved to come up along beside it and tend it using whatever gifts God has given us. It is captured in two simple questions, "Where are people hurting and how can I help?"

Now you may have noticed an interesting thing here. This work is sacrificial and sacramental. You may know that in the ancient world, sacrificial is often expressed by having something broken open in such a way that the ordinary became a sign of the presence of the holy. This is where we get the word sacrament from. Sacraments like communion and baptism in our tradition, are signs of the holy breaking forth in our lives.

But the sacramental life, is not just in these two acts. It is in every act of giving by which our hearts are broken open and strangely healed at the same time. This motion of God will show up in the most surprising of ways. I have seen it.

Prior to coming into this role of transitional conference minister I was a local church pastor for over 30 years. In the last parish I served, David's United Church of Christ in Canal Winchester, I had many wise friends who taught me about the Christian faith and even more importantly bore for me the presence of God.

One of my greatest teachers was the only person I have ever been with on the day of his birth, the day of his baptism, traveled almost all the way through confirmation and was with him on the day of his untimely death at age 15. This wise teacher's name was Aidan. Aidan had neurofibromatosis which you may know is a growth of tumors at the end of one's nerves. By age five, Aidan been through more chemo and doctors and hospitals than most of us will experience in a lifetime.

A tumor from the NF on Aidan's optic nerve had rendered him legally blind, though he could see shadowy figures with his eyes. But the vision of his heart was 20/20. Maybe you have known someone like this in your own life.

One Sunday morning during worship, while I was up in the chancel offering the assurance of forgiveness following our prayer of confession, I noticed that the folks in the congregation were breaking out in smiles. And I thought to myself, they are really getting it. They are really getting how much God loves them and that God can never cease to be love. There was delight in the house of the Lord.

Then I noticed something. Aidan was slowly walking up the center aisle and I could tell that he was handing something out. He had started at the very back the pews were quite full as was often the case and bit by bit he was working his way forward. In his hand was a baggie. And in that baggie were cards which everyone got.

Finally, he got up to where I was standing, stuck his hand in the baggie and pulled out a card and handed it to me. And he said, "Here Dave, you'll probably need this." On it read, "Aidan Carter, Smileologist Extraordinaire If you've lost your smile, I'll help you find it."

Of course, I could not help but smile along with the rest of the congregation and feel the joy of God rising up inside me. On that day, we all knew what it meant to be fully alive. This blind boy helped us see God more clearly.

Because we all knew that every one of us goes hurting at some point and needs the light of God's love to break forth in unexpected ways that heal divisions and dares us to dream of a world more beautiful and good.

We were also taught something about the sacramental and sacrificial nature of life. You see, by the world's standards looking from the outside it appeared that Aidan had nothing to give to the world. But by God's standard of grace, he gave everything in an unselfconscious freedom that broken open closed hearts and stirred a discovery of the love that actually holds life together.

And he reminded us that there is no human being born without a gift to give. And when we give the gift freely, responding to the aching heart of another, God multiplies that gift many times over. And not only that, such sacrificial giving breaks us open in such a way that we become sacramental signs – that is actual signs of the life and love of Jesus Christ in the life of the world.

Now you together, as community of followers of Jesus Christ, are in a season of renewal, thanksgiving, and sacrifice. I asked Pastor Becky to

include a little baggie in your bulletins and in the mailing that went out this week. You probably wondered what in the world is that for?

It's a little reminder to you from Aidan. Your life is that baggie. And though it appears empty, it isn't. You know the gifts God has given you that actually fill that bag. The question is in what way is God inviting you to become fully alive through the gifts you will offer so that the joy of the world local and global may grow?

Only you can answer that question. But as you consider it, may you continue to be blessed with an awareness of the larger move of God breaking you open so that by God's grace you will discover the promise which the prophet provides.

Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, your healing spring up quickly. Your call answered by the Holy One who in your hour of need says, "Here I am." Friends, you can trust this promise with your whole life. It is the good news! I give thanks to God for you. Blessings and Godspeed. Amen and Amen.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR GIFTS

OFFERING SENTENCES: Practicing what we teach: the words and worship here at St. Paul are beautiful, but God cares just as much about what we do in every hour of the week, and about what happens here at St. Paul during the week. We are partners with God and with one another in this marvelous ministry, and our giving is one way that we practice what we teach: generosity and joy. 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)

God, we thank you and praise you. Accept our gifts and offering which we give with love and thanks. Bless us, as we look for ways to share your love and respond to your great gift of Jesus. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

*HYMN

Here I Am, Lord

WITNESS & MISSION

559

Here I Am, Lord

Unison
G Am D7 C
G G G G

1 I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my
2 I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my
3 I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the

G D G Em Am7 C

peo - ple cry. All who dwell in dark and sin
peo - ple's pain. I have wept for love of them,
poor and lame. I will set a feast for them,

Am D7 D D G Am D7
G G F# C G G G

my hand will save. I who made the stars of night,
they turn a - way. I will break their hearts of stone,
my hand will save. Fin-est bread I will pro-vide

C G G D G Em
G G G G G G

I will make their dark - ness bright. Who will bear my
give them hearts for love a - lone. I will speak my
till their hearts be sat - is - fied. I will give my

Am7 C Am $\frac{G}{B}$ C6 *slowing* D **Refrain**
 $\frac{D7}{F\#}$

light to them? Whom shall I send?
 Word to them. Whom shall I send?
 life to them. Whom shall I send? Here I

a tempo
 G Gsus G $\frac{D7}{A}$ $\frac{C}{E}$ D7 G

am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have

$\frac{Cmaj7}{G}$ Am $\frac{G}{B}$ C6 D $\frac{D}{F\#}$ D

heard you call - ing in the night. I will

G Gsus G $\frac{C}{G}$ G $\frac{C}{E}$ D7 G

go, Lord, if you lead me. I will

Am7 $\frac{D}{C}$ D G $\frac{C}{G}$ G

hold your peo - ple in my heart.

*BENEDICTION

*BENEDICTION RESPONSE

Pass the Love

Pass the Love

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

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

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

Bless the Ho - ly Name. Praise our___ God.

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

*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

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

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

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Church Calendar-November 8-November 14, 2020

Sunday	9:00am	Sunday School
	10:15am	Worship w/Veteran's Recognition
	11:15am	Mission Team
	5:00pm-6:30pm	Splash
Monday	11:30am	Devotions (Facebook Live)
	2:00pm-4:00pm	Coffee Shop w/Rev. Becky

Tuesday	11:30am	Devotions (Facebook Live)
	5:30pm-7:30pm	Blessing Pantry is Open
	7:00pm	Council
Wednesday	11:30am	Devotions (Facebook Live)
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry is Open
	6:00pm-6:45pm	Jr High Youth Group
	6:30pm	Confirmation (via Zoom)
Thursday	7:00pm-7:45pm	Sr High Youth Group
	11:30am	Devotions (Facebook Live)
	1:00pm-3:00pm	Blessing Pantry is Open
Friday	6:30pm	Bible Study via Zoom
	11:30am	Devotions (Facebook Live)
	Afternoon	Office Closed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Altar Flowers are given in Honor of Max Messick and all Military Members and Veterans by Rob, Mimi & Mallory Messick.

Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions Avg.-100, October 25-Sunday Worship Online-223, In Person-54, Sunday School-16 students, 7 teachers, No Splash-Trick or Treat, October 28-Confirmation-Jr/Sr High Youth-Cancelled.

Blessing Pantry-is located 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 Hanenkraft, 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.

Sunday's in November-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.

Meetings: Mission Team-Sunday, November 8-11:15am-Assembly Room. **Council**-Tuesday, November 10-7:00pm-Assembly Room.

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

2021 Altar Flower Chart has been posted in the Narthex. Please sign up for the date(s) you would like. You may also call the church office Monday-Friday to sign up. Thank you.

Thanksgiving Community Meal-hosted by St Paul & The New Bremen New Knoxville Rotary Club. Mark your calendars for Monday, November 23. This meal will be carryout/delivery only no indoor dining. Carryouts will be available from 5:00pm-6:00pm-Herman Street side of Education Building.

November/December 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.

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 Blessing Pantry: Send 25 space pantry (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.

November Monthly Mission-is Christmas gifts for the children of Washington UCC and surrounding families in Cincinnati. Our donations will go towards their program called “Gifts to the Manger” in which parents come to the church to pick out clothes and toys so they can give their children gifts at Christmas. A Christmas tree, containing ornaments with gift ideas for a specific age of boy or girl, is in the Narthex. We ask that you shop for that child and **bring your gifts back to church unwrapped and place them under the tree by Sunday, November 29th.** No violent toys or games, please. Can’t get out to shop? We are also accepting monetary donations. Last year we gave over \$1,000 along with all the gifts to the children. The gifts and money will then be delivered to Washington UCC for their scheduled “Gifts to the Manger” event to be held on December 13th. Thank you for your generous gifts to this mission!