

November 23, 2020

Dear St. Paul Church Family and Friends,

During Thanksgiving week, we continue to thank God for your faithfulness, generosity and love.

On November 20, the Heartland Conference (former Ohio Conference) along with all the United Church of Christ associations in the conference sent a letter to all UCC churches and pastors recommending that in-person worship be suspended immediately until the first of the year. St. Paul's Church Council discussed and voted on this recommendation. **Beginning this Sunday, November 29, worship will return to online only until Sunday, January 10.** This also means Sunday School, youth programs and all education building reservations are canceled. Confirmation will still take place via Zoom.

Your pledge cards for 2021 are included in this mailing. Please complete the cards, sending them to the church office in the enclosed envelope.

Enclosed you will find the budget proposal for 2021. (Any questions or concerns please contact President Jeff Quellhorst 937-689-9517) Since we will not be worshipping in person for our congregational meeting on December 6, the meeting will take place entirely by Zoom. Zoom has both video and call-in components. Below is the login information. If you would like this sent to you electronically, please contact Pastor Becky.

Here is the Congregational Meeting Zoom link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87534319438?pwd=czFETlpNWTcxVmFSRyt3NDFnNWthdz09>

**Meeting ID: 875 3431 9438    Passcode: 051346**

You can also join the meeting by phone: +1 646 558 8656

**Meeting ID: 875 3431 9438**

**Passcode: 051346**

This will be the first time we have met this way, so please be patient with us on December 6!

May the peace of Christ, which passes all understanding, be with you!

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 23, 2020

**Operating Fund**

**Beg. Balance (\$2,974.14)**

Giving Income \$4,242.55(weekly)

Endowment Transfers \$34,781.01(ytd)

Income \$269,620.63 (YTD)

Expenses \$275,448.76 (YTD)

Balance **(\$8,802.27)**

**Building Maint & Property Care**

Beg. Balance \$83,428.04

Income \$14,381.00 (YTD)

Endowment Income \$1,756.84 (YTD)

Expenses \$31,000.75(YTD)

Balance \$68,565.13

**Local Aid**

Beg. Balance \$9,934.05

Income \$16,403.00(YTD)

Expenses \$19,236.08(YTD)

Balance \$7,100.97

Bless Pantry Inc. \$14,911.16

Bless Pantry Ex. \$12,078.83

Balance \$2,832.33

**Our Church Wider Mission**

Pledge \$30,000.00

Income \$565.00(weekly)

Income \$22,746.00 (YTD)

**Project of the Year**

Income \$25.00(weekly)

Balance \$2,424.00

NOVEMBER 29, 2020  
FIRST SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT



*Stay awake, for God is coming with power.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

|           |                        |                                 |
|-----------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sunday    | Mark 13:24-37          | The day and hour unknown        |
| Monday    | Isaiah 64:1-9          | A communal prayer for help      |
| Tuesday   | 1 Corinthians 1:3-9    | God is faithful                 |
| Wednesday | Revelation 22:12-21    | Jesus is coming soon            |
| Thursday  | Micah 4:1-5            | Peace and prosperity            |
| Friday    | 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 | Children of light               |
| Saturday  | Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19   | Prayer for Israel's restoration |
| Sunday    | Mark 1:1-8             | The beginning of the good news  |

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Mark 13:26 (NRSV)*

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### **A Prayer for the Week:**

Deliver us from harm, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine on us, that we may be saved through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 80:3, 7, and 19)

#### **Mealtime Prayer:**

Dear God, we thank you for this food; may it strengthen us that we may await your coming with power and glory through Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

#### **A Blessing to Give:**

May you be blessed with hope and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.



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NOVEMBER 29, 2020

### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Awake, Awake, and Greet  
the Morn*

### 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:

- When have you had a challenging or scary experience?
- What are some dangerous or alarming situations we face in our world today?
- Sometimes it seems easier to deny the dangers we face and pretend they are not really a problem. How does faith in Jesus give us hope and help us to face scary times?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Mark 13:24-37.

Advent begins with an awareness of the frailty of life. We may come up with short-term fixes like finding shelter, warmth, and food. There is always the challenge of the unforeseen storm that can flood our lives with devastation, when the whole world seems to be falling down around us (vv. 24-25). No generation escapes these trials and sufferings (vv. 29-30). It happened to the people who returned from Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 64); it happened to the first Christians as noted by Mark in chapter 13; and, it happens all around the world today. What we need is the God who promises to show up and be the difference-maker. This Advent we are reminded to be alert to this God who shows up in Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus we have hope because we have the one in whom the truth of his words will never pass away, never end, never fail (v. 31). So live life with gusto, with courage, with hope, and stay awake, keep alert, don't give up (vv. 33, 35, and 37). How does public worship, reading the Bible and prayer help you stay awake to Jesus' coming into our lives?

*Pray:* **Almighty and living God, give us hope and confidence to await your coming into our lives with faith in your healing and renewing power through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Advent is a time to recall the basic needs of life: a loving and gracious God and justice and mercy that all may have enough to live. In what ways can you "stay awake" this Advent season by caring for the needs of others and providing needed resources for the homeless?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The church year begins on the first Sunday in Advent. This coming year, the Gospel readings will be from Mark. To launch the new church year, gather together all the Bibles in your home. If you have an Advent wreath, place the Bibles near the wreath. As you light the first candle, the candle of hope, use this prayer of blessing: **Almighty God, we thank you for the Bible, and especially for the good news about Jesus our Savior. Give us hope as we read, listen to, and think about what the Bible says to us in this new church year. Make us into people who are strong in our faith and full of love. Amen.**



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



So much darkness. Offer whatever light you can.

## **St. Paul United Church of Christ**

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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! Your presence 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 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 Lynda Goodwin** 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

**November 29, 2020**  
**First Sunday of Advent: Hope**

**Worship Leaders**

Ministers

Rev. Becky Erb Strang

Pastor Dee Schroer

Cheyenne Olt

Dick Hudson

The Congregation

Senior Pastor

Associate Pastor

Accompanist/Vocalist

Organist

The \* indicates all who are able may stand

GATHERING MUSIC

*Dies Irae*

from Verde's Requim

**GREETING AND LIGHTING OF CANDLES:** The history of humanity is fraught with pain—especially the pain that is accompanied by fear and leads to oppression and violence of one group of people against another. This is the world into which Jesus was born and through which his teachings would challenge and call for transformation. Our opening words come from an anonymous Jewish poet: *I believe in the sun, even when the sun is not shining*, were scrawled on a wall during the Holocaust. These words have become part of our theme song for our season—calling us to examine our tendencies to annihilate fear by annihilating each other.

The entire poem goes like this:

*“I believe in the sun  
even when it is not shining  
And I believe in love,*

*even when there's no one there.  
And I believe in God,  
even when he is silent.*

*I believe through any trial,  
there is always a way  
But sometimes in this suffering  
and hopeless despair  
My heart cries for shelter,  
to know someone's there  
But a voice rises within me, saying hold on  
my child, I'll give you strength,  
I'll give you hope. Just stay a little while.*

*I believe in the sun  
even when it is not shining  
And I believe in love  
even when there's no one there  
But I believe in God  
even when he is silent  
I believe through any trial  
there is always a way.*

*May there someday be sunshine  
May there someday be happiness  
May there someday be love  
May there someday be peace....*

The power of story and music will call us this season to a different response: transformation and reconciliation through hope, love, joy and peace. This Advent and Christmas, let us fill our days and our nights with music and light as we affirm and act upon the reasons we can still “believe, even when” we are discouraged.

As we light the altar and Christ candles, I invite those of you who are worshiping at home to light a candle or candles in preparation for today's worship.

# RINGING OF THE BELLS

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THRESHOLD SONG

## *I Believe* I Believe

Mark A. Miller

I \_\_\_\_\_ be-lieve in the sun, \_\_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_\_ be-

10 lieve in the sun, \_\_\_\_\_ e - ven when, \_\_\_\_\_ e - ven when it's not shin -

18 ing. \_\_\_\_\_

**CROSSING THE THRESHOLD:** This Advent, we are looking to hear words of comfort, of challenge, and of good news. The prophet Isaiah and the four Gospel authors were writing in a time when people needed desperately to hear all of these as well. This first week, Isaiah, the prophet, and Mark—the Gospel writer who published first—reassure the people that good news is beginning and yet they both say, *Make yourself ready! Raise your voices, change your hearts, get ready to be transformed, because now is the time.* Let us embrace hope in order to do what needs to be done to bring more light into the world.

Will all who are able please stand?

Leader: I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,

Even when, even when it's not shining

*Soloist: I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,*

*Even when, even when it's not shining.*

Leader: The place without light

*Soloist: The place without light*

Leader: The depth of the night

*Soloist: The depth of the night*

Leader: The pit of unknowing

*Soloist: The pit of unknowing*

Leader: Let us pray. Holy one, we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of untiring hope. Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—even when our view is obscured by clouds of doubt, ignite the flame of hope within us,

**People: That we might glow with its brilliance from the inside out.**

*Soloist: I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,*

*Even when...even when...it's not shining.*

(Advent One Candle Is Lit)

Leader: Help us, O God, face this bleak night of the soul, this season of waiting, and help us to embrace this time as a womb of rebirth.

**People: Amen.**

\*OPENING HYMN      *Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus*



# 153 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

F C F  $\frac{Gm}{F}$   $\frac{C7}{E}$  F C Dm C  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{C7}{G}$  F  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{Gm}{Bb}$  Dm C F

1 Come, thou long - ex - spect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;  
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child and yet a king,

F C F  $\frac{Gm}{F}$   $\frac{C7}{E}$  F C Dm C  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{C7}{G}$  F  $\frac{F}{A}$   $\frac{Gm}{Bb}$  Dm C F

from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king - dom bring.

Am Dm Gm7 C7 Dm7  $\frac{C7}{E}$  F  $\frac{F}{E}$  Dm  $\frac{F}{A}$  G $\sharp$  Gm Bb maj7 Csus C

Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art;  
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;

$\frac{F}{A}$  F6  $\frac{Gm}{F}$   $\frac{C7}{E}$  F  $\frac{F}{E}$  Bm7(b5)  $\frac{C7}{D}$  Bb  $\frac{C7}{E}$  F  $\frac{F7}{A}$  Bb  $\frac{F}{A}$  Bb  $\frac{F}{C}$  C7 F

dear De - sire of ev - ery na - tion, Joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.  
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

\*ADVENT PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

**O God, our hearts desire the warmth of your love, and our minds are searching for the light of your Word. Increasing our longing for Christ, our Savior, and give us the strength to grow in love, that the dawn of his coming may find us rejoicing in his presence and welcoming the light of his truth. We ask this in the name of Jesus, whose birth we await. Amen.**

\*RESPONSE

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (chorus)



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

The image shows a musical score for the chorus of 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel'. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. The lyrics are written below the treble staff. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests. There are several measures with a fermata over the final notes of the phrase.

### CHILDREN'S MOMENT: THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

The song This Little Light of Mine, is nearly 100 years old this year. No one knows exactly who wrote it, but during the 1950's and 1960's our African American brothers and sisters sang this song as a song of resistance: as a reminder that no matter the oppressive circumstances, no matter the darkness we experience, God's light within us shines through when we let it.

Each week during the Children's Moment we are going to add a verse to this song so that by the time Christmas comes, we will be ready to celebrate the birth of God's Light in our midst.

# This Little Light of Mine

African-American spiritual

525

Matt. 5:14-16

1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine,

this lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine,

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine, let it

shine, let it shine, let it shine. (let it shine.)

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-11

(NRSV)

*Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.*

*<sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,*

*that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.*

*<sup>3</sup> A voice cries out:*

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

*<sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.*

*<sup>5</sup> Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."*

*<sup>6</sup> A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"*

*All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.*

*<sup>7</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.*

*<sup>8</sup> The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.*

*<sup>9</sup> Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"*

*<sup>10</sup> See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.*

*<sup>11</sup> He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.*

(YouTube Search: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Pentatonix* )

*O come, O come, Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear*

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, O come, Great Lord of might  
And to thy tribes on Sinai's height  
In ancient times once gave the law  
In majesty on cloud and awe*

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

NEW TESTAMENT LESSON: Mark 1:1-15

(NRSV)

*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

<sup>2</sup> *As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,*

*“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;*

<sup>3</sup> *the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:*

*‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’”*

<sup>4</sup> *John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*

*<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."*

*<sup>12</sup> And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.*

*<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*

## 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

On this first Sunday of Advent we focus on hope. In these dark days of coronavirus, hope seems most difficult. So much has changed for us this past year: many of us cannot even begin to count our losses—loss of loved ones, loss of careers, loss of financial security, loss of dreams. And yet, no matter the state of the world, Advent arrives, beckoning us to imagine hope in the midst of the bleak midwinter.

Hope. The story I tell you today is a story of hope. Rafael Schachter was a music composer and conductor of Jewish decent born in 1905 in Eastern Europe. By 1941 he was rounded up by the Nazis and placed in the Terezin concentration camp in the Czech Republic. As you can imagine, the conditions at the camp were brutal and seemingly hopeless, yet Mr. Schachter did not give up hope. Instead, he had a plan.

Against all odds, he had a piano smuggled into the basement of the men's barracks. With only one copy of Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi's Requiem, he taught other prisoners—both women and men to sing. And this is what those primarily Jewish men and women discovered: that singing is an act of resistance, an act of defiance. Learning and singing that Catholic funeral mass brought hope into a seemingly hopeless situation. The prisoners began to perform their music and ultimately

received the support of their jailers to keep making music. (But I have to add: the Nazis saw these choirs as proof that the conditions at the concentration camp were not terrible. The prisoners, however, saw the music as a form of resistance and hope.)

Instinctively we know that music has the power to change our moods, change our day, change our lives. Singing, playing or listening to music has the power to take us away from our present circumstances and to locate us more fully within Peace and Light and Love. And Hope.

Perhaps this is why our Advent worship services are more important this year than most years. We are surrounded by sickness and death. The news from our nation and our world seems bleak. And yet, we who call ourselves Christians have set aside these weeks to place our hope in a newborn baby: Baby Jesus.

Throughout Advent our scripture lessons will mirror this hope. Each week we will read from the prophet Isaiah—the portion of Isaiah written while the people of Israel were living in exile in Babylon—far away from all that was familiar to them. For approximately 70 years the Israelites were forced to leave their homeland and lay down roots far, far from all that was familiar. And scriptures tell us that was a bleak time in Jewish history. If you want a sense of the despair, read Psalm 137: a cry of agony of the displaced Jewish people in Babylon—an agony that sought revenge with violence.

And yet, today's Old Testament lesson from the prophet Isaiah serves as a reminder that God is in charge. No matter where the Israelites might be living, no matter the distance from the Promised Land, God is still God and Shepherd of their lives. And our lives.

Friends, no matter how badly the coronavirus wants to strip us of our lives, our livelihoods and our freedoms, God is still God. No matter how deep into exile you are in your living room, God is still your Shepherd, my Shepherd, and the Shepherd of both our neighbors AND our enemies. God's love, God's hope, God's peace does not guarantee a life without difficulties, a life without disease, but he does promise us his presence in times both incredibly joyful and overpoweringly awful.

So we look to Jesus. Throughout Advent our New Testament readings each week will be the opening verses of each of our four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. We began today with Mark

because scholars believe it was the first of these four books to be published and shared widely. I'm sure you noticed it: there is no nativity story in Mark. There is no baby Jesus at the beginning of this Gospel. Today we read that Jesus shows up fully grown, ready to be baptized by his cousin, tempted in the wilderness, and proclaiming the good news of repentance and hope.

What might be our takeaway on this first Sunday of Advent? It comes down to hope. Throughout the centuries, our Old Testament tells us that God tried over and over again to bring his people into covenant, into his Shepherd's embrace. And yet the people still wandered. God sent them prophets and teachers. God sent them kings and judges and yet the Israelites kept turning to that which is not God, that which is not Love.

The takeaway? God sent Jesus: his very own son to live amongst us that we might never be separated from God. Because of Jesus, we have hope. Because of Jesus, we can sing—even in the prisons of our homes and minds. Because of Jesus, we spend these weeks awaiting Love to be born among us in this most difficult of times.

This week, I encourage you, I challenge you, to reach out to someone who is hurting, someone who is sick, someone who is experiencing isolation. Give that person a call. Send her a letter. Drop cookies off at his doorstep. BE Jesus for your neighbors.

And if it is you who is hurting or sick or isolated: sing. Be gentle with yourself. Make your prayers visual: visually inviting Jesus into your home and to your kitchen table. In this season of waiting, in this year of waiting, we are challenged to seek hope in unexpected places—for God's hope, grace and love are guaranteed.

Rafael Schachter's choirs sang and sang and sang. Survivors of the concentration camp even to this day speak of the hope they discovered when they sang together.

And Verdi's Requiem? Those words sung in Latin for a Christian funeral service, deeply touched the primarily Jewish prisoners. And what were those words?

*Recall, merciful Jesus,  
that I was the reason for your journey:  
do not destroy me on that day.*

*In seeking me, you sat down wearily; enduring the Cross, you*



*redeemed me:*

*do not let these pains to have been in vain.*

Then a little bit later in the song: *Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant them rest everlasting.*

Friends: as we journey through Advent, no matter your circumstance, your affliction, your isolation, may you know hope and peace now and forevermore. Amen.

## PASTORAL JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

**Joys:** Worshipping Together.

**Concerns:** We are continuing to pray for Dave Waterman (Lima Memorial), Ellen Topp (The James), Drew Wray (Miami Valley), Macie Barlage (Mercy Hospital NICU-St. Louis), Deb Lear, Jan Dammeyer, and Pastor Dee Schroer.

Please remember the family of Ralph Plattner in your prayers. Ralph passed away Wednesday, November 18, 2020.

## PRAYERS IN THE STILLNESS

Leader: I invite you to get in comfortable position of rest. I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can. I invite you to take a deep breath and a deep listening posture—perhaps close your eyes or focus on a candle—as we prepare for our time of prayer.

Soloist: *In The Stillness*

# In the Stillness

Mark Miller

3

The gen-tle pull of God is of-ten lost a-midst the

7  
rush of all the ob-li-ga-tions which lay a claim on us. Yet, just be-yond the fran-tic

11  
pace our rest-less feet have trod, lie deep still pools of qui-et-ness, the

15  
dwell-ing place of God. Meet me in the still-ness, Lord, be the air I

20  
breathe, meet me in the still-ness, Lord, free me to re-ceive. Meet me

26  
in the still-ness, Lord, be the air I breathe, meet me in the still-ness, Lord,

32  
free me to re-ceive. O take me to that se-cret place where lost in

37  
won-der and in awe, that mo-ment comes, and I re-joice to be, and be with

42  
God! Meet me in the still-ness, Lord, be the air I breathe, meet me

47  
in the still-ness, Lord, free me to re-ceive, to re-ceive.

55  
Meet me in the still-ness, Lord, free me to re-ceive, to re-ceive.

3

## PASTORAL PRAYER AND SILENT PRAYER

O God, our hope, we rejoice that you became flesh and made your dwelling among us, even as we long for your return.

As we wait, our hearts overflow with gratitude:

For the beauty of creation...

For your work in the world...

For signs of peace and reconciliation...

For our community and its leaders...

For your work accomplished through your church...

For all these reasons and so much more we give you praise.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son as a helpless child, we also yearn for his return, for the day in which there will be no more sorrow, pain, or death.

Today, we remember in prayer:

The nations of the world...

Those in positions of authority...

The needs of our community...

The cries of the poor, the hungry, the hurting...

St. Paul Church as we live into your call to see Jesus in others...

Hear us now as we lift up to you the prayers of our hearts. SILENCE

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our source of hope. Amen.

## THE LORD'S PRAYER (sung to the tune of *Away in a Manger*)

**Creator in heaven, all praise to your name!**

**Your kingdom among us, your will done the same.**

**By mortals and angels, come, Lord, reign alone!**

**O hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for, provide it each day**

**As we forgive others, our sins take away.**

**In times of temptation, to lead us be near.**

**From evil deliver your children most dear.**

**For yours is the kingdom; o'er all things you reign;  
 And yours is the glory, all things you maintain  
 To you be the glory, resounding again  
 From all of creation, forever! Amen!**

**OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OUR HEARTS TO JESUS**

Offertory Sentences: In this season of gift giving and gift receiving, let us offer our gifts, our lives, and our hearts to Jesus through the ministries of St. Paul Church

**\*DOXOLOGY/CAROL**      *In the Bleak Midwinter*

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a guitar accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "What can I offer poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; if I were a wise man, I would do my part; yet what can I offer: all of my heart." The guitar chords are indicated above the vocal line in each system.

WORDS: Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)  
 MUSIC: Gustav T. Holst (1874-1934)

CRANHAM  
 Irregular

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

**O Mighty One, you have done and are doing great things for us, and holy is your name. Bless all we offer to you—ourselves, our time, and our possessions—that through us your grace and love may be made known to all the world for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Friend. Amen.**

ADVENT

# 155 Comfort, Comfort Now My People

F C E F C Dm C E Gsus G C F A Gm Bb Dm Gm F A Csus C F

1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" so says our God.  
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain!

F C E F C Dm C E Gsus G C F A Gm Bb Dm Gm F A Csus C F

Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.  
 call - ing us to true re - pent - ance since the King - dom now is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign!

F Dm F A Gm F A C F F A Bb C Bb D F C

To God's peo - ple now pro - claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,

F F A Bb Am C Dm Gm Bb Asus A Dm F Dm Gm F A Gm Bb F A Bb C F

Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er!  
 Let the val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!  
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

**\*BENEDICTION:** We wait for justice, but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health, but we do not wait to work toward healing;

We wait for wholeness, but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace, but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred, prejudice and violence.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news that the sun still shines even on cloudy days, fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope. Go into your week humming the tunes that keep hope alive in you and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.

Leader: Raise your voices and repeat after me: Do not be afraid!

**People: Do not be afraid! Amen!**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

**\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

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*

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## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Altar Flowers** are given in memory of Tom Broerman by Ginny & John Voress

**Attendance-Online-Daily Devotions** Avg.-96, November 15-Sunday Worship Online-283, In Person-32, Sunday School-23 students, 5 teachers, Splash-1 students, 2 leaders, November 18-Confirmation-10 students, 11 leaders, Jr High Youth-6, Sr High Youth-1, 3 leaders.

**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.

**Sunday's in November & December-Sunday School** will be via Facebook Live at 9:00am. **Worship**-we will be worshipping via Facebook Live at 10:15am.

**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.

**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!

**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 – Blessing Pantry Needs**-Toilet Paper, Paper Towels, Kleenex, Laundry Detergent, Shaving Cream, Toothpaste, Deodorant, Diapers (size 2, 3, 4 & 6), Baby Wipes, Baby Shampoo, Hand & Body Lotion, Tampons, Cleaning Supplies, Storage Bags and Garbage Bags. Food Items-Fruit, Eggs, Milk-**Thank you!** There is a metal can outside the East Educational Building door for donations.

**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=K2FBaGYzRUUpaRElWUjY4Q1Y4b3UrUT09> 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](mailto:berbstrang@stpaulnb.org)

**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.

**Congregational Meeting-December 6, 2020.** The meeting will begin at the end of worship. The meeting will be held by Zoom (either by website or phone). After the Zoom meeting you will be able to vote in the Auditorium between Noon and 2:00pm on December 6<sup>th</sup>. Jeff Quellhorst, Council President. Here is the Congregational Meeting Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87534319438?pwd=czFETlpNWTcxVmFSRyt3NDFnNWthdz09>

**Meeting ID: 875 3431 9438    Passcode: 051346**

You can also join the meeting by phone: +1 646 558 8656

**Meeting ID: 875 3431 9438    Passcode: 051346**

This will be the first time we have met this way, so please be patient with us on December 6!

### **E-Giving @ St. Paul** **3 Different Ways to Give**

**Online** – Make a donation on our website: [stpaulnb.org](http://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.

### **Poinsettia Order**

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.