

# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Somerset, PA

Thursday, December 31, 2020

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here!

## Our Ministry Team

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Rev. J. Matthew Deal: *Pastor*  
Mrs. Jenn Boland: *Director of Programming for Children, Youth, & Families*  
Mr. Dave Neimiller: *Organist & Director of Music*  
Mrs. Cindy Lambert: *Administrative and Financial Secretary*  
Ms. Marcy Shellenberger: *Children's and Youth Choir Director*  
Mark and Amy Marteeny: *Church Sextons*

Church Council Officers:  
President - Craig Weaver  
Vice President – Pam Webreck  
Secretary – Angie Brumbaugh  
Treasurer – Mike Stutzman

Church Office: 814-445-4534

## A New Year's Letter

Dear St. Paul's Family,

The tree may be down and the decorations put away, but the effects of Christmas are still with us. Unlike 21<sup>st</sup> century hospitals, where mother and child have a short stay, Jesus and his family spent months, if not years in Bethlehem. The story goes that it took the three kings a couple of years to reach the Christ-child. Yet, despite their late arrival, they still felt the call to come and worship the Lord.

Such is our calling. Our calling is to come and learn about the God who is now living in our midst. Like the magi of old, we are journeying on the road of life. There's no way to anticipate what or who we will meet along the way, but one thing is certain, Jesus meets us again and again on the road.

We are sojourners and like the magi, God calls us to encounter Jesus. What might Jesus tell us when we meet him? What might he have us do? How might we respond? The miracle of Christmas is that God is one of us. The miracle of our lives is that God invites us to be part of Christ's body, Christ's work.

I pray that each of us may live more fully into the journey that God has called us, and may the Holy Spirit be with us as we are at work in God's kingdom in 2021.

Blessings,

Pastor Matt

**We have several worship opportunities for you this Sunday**

**Please join us digitally or in spirit.**

[Here are our worship opportunities for Sunday, January 3rd](#)

**Worship by Telephone.** We are very pleased to announce a toll-free worship option. The toll-free conference call number is 1-844-855-4444. The automated service will then ask for your access code or PIN. Please enter: 512013#. The audio service will begin at 11:00am.

**Online.** This Sunday's Service streaming live on the church's Facebook page and YouTube at 9:30am. You can find the church's YouTube channel by searching for St. Paul's UCC Somerset in the YouTube search bar. The streamed service will be available on demand on both digital platforms following its streaming at 9:30am. (This service is pre-recorded but is streamed live for the online community.)

No in-person service this Sunday.

While in-person services are suspended, you are invited to attend self-guided prayer and meditation in the Sanctuary this week from 9:00am-11:00am. Pastor Matt will be on hand if you need to pray or talk with him.

## Worship Resources for this Week:

*Sunday, January 3rd*

*The Second Sunday after Christmas & Epiphany Observation*

\*The Call to Worship:

Leader: Arise, shine, for your light has come!

**All: We gather today to feel the glorious Light sent from God.**

L: Even in the midst of darkness, we are surrounded by the Light.

**All: Our hearts rejoice and we lift up our eyes and open our ears to hear.**

L: Let us gather to hear the Good News of Christ!

Opening Hymn:

*"Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"*

Chalice hymnal #150

The Greeting

Call to Confession ^

L: Like the Wise Ones of old, we too seek the King who has come to set us free.

**All: In our searching for your Son, hear now our confession, so that we are ready to receive Christ into our hearts**

Prayer of Confession (unison)

***God of Light, we confess that darkness often overtakes us. Our sins are many and they often plunge us deeper into fear and hopelessness. We have lusted over things, people, and power. Our mistrust of others has caused us deep pain and sorrow as relationships have been strained and covenants broken. Our failure to work together has distracted from your ongoing mission to bring wholeness and light to all of creation. We have, at times, even failed to uphold the most basic command you gave us, to love ourselves, love you, and love our neighbor. Forgive us, Holy One, for these failures and help us to find Christ, yet again, in our own lives. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.***

*A time for personal reflection and confession.*

Words of Assurance ^

L: God's light shines bright in the world! May the blessings of God's grace and love help us to move from darkness into light.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### Passing the Peace

### Children's Time

#### **Isaiah 60:1-6**

60:1 Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

60:2 For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you.

60:3 Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

60:4 Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

60:5 Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.

60:6 A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

#### **Matthew 2:1-12**

2:1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

2:2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

2:3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him;

2:4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

2:5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

2:6 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

2:7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared.

2:8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage."

2:9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was.



P: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of the Passover.

Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

P: Christ has died, Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory.

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, this gifts of bread and wine, and bless us that as we receive them we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united with Christ and one another, and we may continue faithful in all things. In the strength Christ give us, we offer ourselves to you, eternal God, and give thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

#### The Prayer of Our Savior

***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.***

#### The Breaking of Bread and Pouring Wine

P: The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

#### The Call to Supper

P: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

#### The Sharing of the Elements

P: Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, broken for you.

All: Amen!

P: Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you.

All: Amen!

#### \*The Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison):

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen

Closing Hymn: "Go, Tell It on the Mountain" Chalice Hymnal #167

#### Benediction

"Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; 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."

And may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit remain with you forever.  
Amen.

Watch Facebook and YouTube for special devotionals and offerings during the week.

*Check Facebook and watch your email for changes of services that may have changes from week to week, possibly even day to day.*

**Please check our website periodically throughout the week for updates: [www.stpaulsuccsomerset.org](http://www.stpaulsuccsomerset.org)**

**We are grateful for your continued support of St. Paul's ministry!**

*You are invited to attended self-guided prayer and meditation in the Sanctuary each Sunday from 9:00am-11:00am while in-person worship is suspended. Pastor Matt will be on hand if you need to pray or talk with him.*

*The Jan-February-March These Days have not been received yet. There was a delay in printing/shipping. They have assured me that the order will be filled as soon as possible. I will send out an email once they are received at the church.*

**The 2021 Offering Envelopes will be available for pick-up on Thursday, January 7<sup>th</sup> in the Narthex.**

### **Thank you from the Deal Family**

Amanda, Holly, Daniel, and I would like to thank all of you for the cards, gifts, goodies, and well-wishes that you sent our way over the past weeks. The Christmas season is a holy and special time for us. Your generosity lifted our spirits during these challenging times. —*Pastor Matt*

## Our January Mission Offering: Church World Service Blanket Program

Since its formation in 1957, the United Church of Christ has worked with Church World Service (founded in 1946) to accomplish more together than it could alone, joining hearts and resources to create a tradition of help and a legacy of hope. They work to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world.

When disaster strikes, **Church World Service** is the primary agency through which the UCC gives support for relief and recovery efforts. This assistance may take the form of winterized family tents for Pakistani earthquake survivors, food packages and tankers full of water for displaced people in violence-torn Darfur, Sudan, or long-term recovery assistance for families affected by hurricanes, tornados, or flooding across the United States.



### **We are pleased to offer an album for prayer and meditation!**

#### *Reflections: Music for Meditation*

Dave Neimiller, St. Paul's Director of Music is releasing a collection of original piano music.

*"Music has been such an important part of my life. It's helped me grow spiritually, offered comfort and hope in times of challenge and loss, and been an expression of joy for life's many blessings. My hope is that as Christmas and the New Year draw near, my music will help you find a spiritual center during all of the challenges we are facing. I felt called to compose this collection as a gift to our church family, hoping to share music's healing and peace and also to help support St. Paul's life giving mission and ministry"*

Dave's original collection of piano songs is available on CD or as a downloadable file. You can obtain a copy by contacting Dave. His email address is: [dneimillerstpaulsucc@gmail.com](mailto:dneimillerstpaulsucc@gmail.com) or by calling the church at 814-445-4534.

In keeping with the Spirit of this season of giving and in honoring Dave's request to help support St. Paul's work during these challenging times, a suggested donation of \$20.00 for the album will be split equally between St. Paul's general fund and mission initiatives that help families in our community during the pandemic. *We are aware that 2020 has been a very challenging year for many people financially, so if you cannot afford the suggested donation, but would still like a copy of "Reflections," please don't hesitate to contact Dave. Financial challenges should not prevent anyone from enjoying music that helps to bring peace and healing to the soul.*