



St. Paul's United Methodist Church of Odessa  
*Reaching Up Reaching In Reaching Out*  
Pastor Linda Ray, 406 Main Street, Odessa, DE 302-378-2420

[www.stpaulsodessa.org](http://www.stpaulsodessa.org)

CCLI 11305346 and Streaming Lic. 21184487

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**December 18, 2022, 8:30 AM Service, ASL & Virtual**

**WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE**

**WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES**

#### GATHERING MUSIC AND PHOTOS

Duane Dillard, Music Ministry, Mark Holden, Photographer & Curator, and Gail Garner ASL Interpreter

#### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:

John & Patti Harmer

One: God wants us to know even when we are not sure ourselves.

**Many: God wants us to experience God's presence even when we think we can handle life on our own.**

One: God sends us signs of God's presence with us, all we need to do is keep our eyes open and look.

**Many: We light these candles, the candle of joyous hope, of proclaimed peace, of deep, everlasting joy, and a candle of presence that speaks of love, as a sign that no matter our circumstance, we know we are not alone.**

**All Singing: A candle is burning, a candle of love. A candle to point us to heaven above. A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth, for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.**

#### PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

*Lord, I Lift Your Name on High*

Black Hymnal 2088

**OPENING PRAYER (all praying): As streets fill with shoppers, bright lights and tempting offers Christmas songs and children's laughter, you lead us along a different path. To a desert river and a prophetic voice. A call to repentance, A call to service, A call to immerse ourselves in living water that will never run dry. A call to prepare a way in our own lives for the Savior of the world to enter in. To know the touch of tender mercy and rest in your forgiving love. For your faithful prophets and your Living Word, we give you thanks. Amen**

#### CHILDREN'S TIME:

*I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light*

Red Hymnal 206

Brian McNelis shares a blessing with our children!

#### PASS THE PEACE (safely share words and signs of blessing)

*I Love You With The Love Of The Lord*  
Words and Music by Jim Golbert. CCLI Song #10130

**I love you with the love of the Lord, yes, I love you with the love of the Lord. I can see in you the glory of my King, and I love you with the love of the Lord.**

#### FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 7: 10-16* (CEB) The Sign of Immanuel

<sup>10</sup> Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign from the Lord your God. Make it as deep as the grave<sup>[a]</sup> or as high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I won't ask; I won't test the Lord."

<sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, "Listen, house of David! Isn't it enough for you to be tiresome for people that you are also tiresome before my God? <sup>14</sup> Therefore, the Lord will give you a sign. The young woman is pregnant and is about to give birth to a son, and she will name him Immanuel.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>15</sup> He will eat butter and honey, and learn to reject evil and choose good. <sup>16</sup> Before the boy learns to reject evil and choose good, the land of the two kings you dread will be abandoned.

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 1: 18-25* (CEB) Birth of Jesus

<sup>18</sup>This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. When Mary his mother was engaged to Joseph, before they were married, she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Joseph her husband was a righteous man. Because he didn't want to humiliate her, he decided to call off their engagement quietly. <sup>20</sup>As he was thinking about this, an angel from the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child she carries was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you will call him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>Now all of this took place so that what the Lord had spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled:

<sup>23</sup>*Look! A virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, And they will call him, Emmanuel.*<sup>[a]</sup>  
(*Emmanuel* means "God with us.")

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did just as an angel from God commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he didn't have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. Joseph called him Jesus.

One: May this story inspire us all. **ALL: To walk in the way that leads to life.**

HYMN OF PREPARATION: *Emmanuel, Emmanuel* Red Hymnal 204

THE MESSAGE: "Wait Upon The Lord With Gratitude" Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*You may speak aloud your joys and concerns.*)

### WE GIVE THANKS

#### OFFERTORY REMINDERS

Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports the **Love Thy Neighbor Fund**.

HANDBELL PRESENTATION Handbell Choir

#### PRAYERS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **O God, you bring us life in ways we do not even realize, in forms we do not always understand. We are so busy, the moments moving faster each day. We do not always pay attention to your presence when it comes. Often, we cannot see what is right in front of us. We are asleep, even when we are awake. We think we are too busy for you, but you, God still choose us. You take our struggles and turn them into strengths calling us apostles, making us friends. Forgive us, God for our distractions. Remind our busy brains that there is nothing we have to do to be loved by you.**

Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION Pastor Linda Ray

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**ALL: And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

**ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through the prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*Communion Setting 2257-b*

**ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

(Lifting and breaking the bread) On the night in which he gave himself up for us he took bread, gave God thanks, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to God, gave it to his disciples, and said "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

*Communion Setting 2257-c*

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**ALL: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

*Communion Setting 2257-d*

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**ALL: Amen. Amen. Amen. Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna in the highest!**

Pastor: Let us join our hearts and voices in the prayer that Jesus taught us:

**Our Father, which 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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory Forever. AMEN.**

*(The congregation will come forward to partake of the bread and cup.)*

Pastor: Pastor: Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**WE GO IN THE SPIRIT!**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

CLOSING MUSIC

*Shine Jesus Shine*

Black Hymnal 2173

POSTLUDE

Duane Dillard

***SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY***

Liturgist: Brian McNelis

Audio/Video: Charlii Miller & John Littell

Communion Officiant/Server: Barbara Lynn Manlove

Duane Dillard, Minister of Music

ASL Interpreter: Gail Garner

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor	<a href="mailto:lindaray@vaumc.org">lindaray@vaumc.org</a>	(540) 207-1787
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Amy Brown, Music Ministry Director	<a href="mailto:amyrowebrown@gmail.com">amyrowebrown@gmail.com</a>	(480) 677-0910
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music	<a href="mailto:duanedillard@gmail.com">duanedillard@gmail.com</a>	(443) 593-2470

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

<b>Sunday 12/18</b>	<b>Worship Service 8:30 AM &amp; 11:00 AM, Sunday School &amp; Adult Bible Study 9:45 AM, Dingo &amp; Dessert 3:00 PM.</b>
<b>Monday 12/19</b>	<b>Boy Scouts, 6-8 PM, Advent Bible Study 10:00 – 11:30AM in Fellowship Hall</b>
<b>Tuesday 12/20</b>	<b>Cub Scouts 6-8 PM, Leadership Mtg. 6:30 PM TBD</b>
<b>Wednesday 12/21</b>	<b>TOPS Mtg 6:00 PM, Handbell Rehearsal 6:00 PM, Choir Rehearsal 7:10 PM.</b>
<b>Thursday 12/22</b>	<b>Prayer Group Ministry, Carole Harmon's Home, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM</b>
<b>Friday 12/23</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Saturday 12/24</b>	<b>No AA Mtg tonight, will resume December 31, 7:00 PM, Christmas Eve Worship Services 5:00 PM &amp; 7:00 PM.</b>

**SUNDAY DECEMBER 18<sup>th</sup> DINGO & DESSERTS** in Fellowship Hall will be from 3:00 – 5:00 PM!! Come join the fun and fellowship! Beverages and paper products will be supplied; please bring a dessert/snack to share that is prepackaged.

**ADVENT BIBLE STUDY** during December, the first meeting is Monday (and each Monday thereafter), beginning December 5, 2022, 10:00 -11:30 AM. Next meeting is December 19<sup>th</sup>.

**2023 PLEDGE CARDS** have been mailed to those who hadn't picked them up. Extra Pledge Cards are available in the Narthex. Completed cards can be dropped off to the Church Office, to Alice Mullins, Treasurer or dropped into the Pledge Card silver box at the back, side door of the Church, or mailed.

**FINANCES FOR STEWARDSHIP** to date, 65 Pledges, total pledges as of 12/12/22: \$170,552 for 2023.

**PRAYER REQUEST BOX** is available in the Narthex along with the prayer request cards. Just complete the form, fold, and drop in the box on the corner shelf located at the second set of doors into Fellowship Hall.

**CHRISTMAS TREE FARM OF JOHN AND BETH HICKEY** and family is opening on the Friday after Thanksgiving, November 25<sup>th</sup> from 8:00-5:00. They will have precut trees, wreaths, and photo ops. John's number is (410) 708-3054. Please come out and support them. Thanks.

Federal Hill Christmas Trees  
32762 Galena Sassafras Rd.  
Galena MD 21635

**Birthdays:** December 19 – Frank Fitzwater; December 21 – Kyle Benjamin; December 24 – Stephanie Lambert, Richard Nelson.

**Anniversaries:** December 22 – Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin.



**ST. PAUL'S**  
United Methodist Church of Odessa  
*Reaching Up, Reaching In, Reaching Out*

## **St. Paul's Mission Statement**

### **Reaching Up to praise God in vibrant worship**

God calls us to live out our discipleship grounded in Christ's awakening us to the glory and majesty of God in all creation, and we respond together by worshiping God with our gratitude and praise. Standing or lifting our hands high are both ancient postures of worship, and so our dance of discipleship involves reaching up with our hearts, souls, and bodies, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.  
For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

*Psalms 100:4-5 (NRSV)*

### **Reaching In to deepen our spiritual walk with Christ**

Christ accepts us as we are, and then calls us to follow him and learn from him, growing in our spiritual walk through practices the church calls spiritual disciplines: prayer, fasting, meditation, studying God's Word, individually and with others. As we grow in the knowledge of God, we discover more about the extraordinary plans God has for our lives.

*"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."*

*John 8:31-32 (NRSV)*

### **Reaching Out with acts of love and compassion**

Here's where it all comes together! Assured of God's eternal love, strengthened by the grace and knowledge of Christ, we are ready for the Holy Spirit to kindle a fire in our lives, gifting us for the labor of love God has prepared for us to accomplish. Having fallen in love with God, we love and serve our neighbors.

*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."*

*Matthew 25:40 (NRSV)*

## **Current list of Committees, Chairs and Members as of 05/2022**

Pastor	Rev. Linda Driver Ray
Ministry Candidate	Min. Adrienne Dillard
Lay Leadership	Janet Miller, Melissa Brooks, Mark Holden
Church Leadership Co-Chairs	Steve Johnson & Cathy Blanco
Trustee Chair	Charlii Miller
Trustee Committee	Charlii Miller, John Littell, Lynda Lambert
	Rev. Linda Driver Ray (Ex-Officio), Barbara
	Lynn Manlove, Don Mueller, John Cate,
	Cathy Blanco, Steve Johnson
SPRC Chair	Rick Pulling
SPRC Committee	Rick Pulling, Nancee Bleistine, Ellie Leuliette,
	June Stemmler, Janet Miller, Rev. Linda Driver Ray
	(Ex-Officio), Joy Littell, Cathy Blanco, Steve Johnson
Finance Chair	Vacant/Hap Bonham – Interim Chair
Treasurer	Alice Mullins
Finance Committee	Hap Bonham, Angela Christian, Carolyn Stanley
	Rev. Linda Driver Ray (Ex-Officio), Sandy Urstadt, Ann Baker, Alan Martin, Melissa Brooks
Worship Arts Committee	Barbara Lynn Manlove, Ellie Leuliette
	Nancee Bleistine, Janet Miller
Missions	Sue Holden, Dawn Buckworth, Sandy & Bob
	Urstadt, Charlotte Miller, Nadine Johnson
	Karen Ellis, Patti & John Harmer, Barbara
	Bonham, Joy Littell, Mark Holden, Nancy Judd,
	Ann Newswanger

Please contact Bonnie Valeski at [bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org](mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org) with any changes or additions

## **MISSIONS AND CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **WEEKLY GATHERINGS – CHURCH BUILDING**

OFFICE HOURS Tuesday -Thursday, 9AM-2:00PM

- Boy Scouts –Mondays 7-8:30PM
- Cub Scouts –Tuesdays 6-8PM, beginning Sept. 20th
- TOPS Meeting – Wednesdays 6 PM.
- St. Paul’s Prayer and Praise Group Ministry – Thursdays 10 AM
- St. Paul’s Handbell Rehearsal – Wednesdays at 6 PM in the Music Room
- St. Paul’s Choir Rehearsal – Wednesday at 7:10 PM in the Sanctuary

- AA Meeting – Saturdays 7 PM

## **MONTHLY GATHERINGS**

- Finance Meeting – 2nd Monday 6:30 PM
- Trustees Meeting – 2nd Tuesday 6:30 PM
- SPRC Meeting – 4th Thursday 6:30 PM
- Leadership Meeting – 3rd Tuesday 6:30 PM
- PFLAG Meeting – 3rd Thursday 6:30 PM
- Reconciling Ministries – 2nd Thursday, 6:30 PM, will resume in January 2023

### **Reconciling Ministries Informational Meetings**

The Reconciling Committee will NOT BE MEETING November or December. We will resume meetings in January, again the Second Thursday of each month at 6:30. We plan on doing a four-part series of a book study. Stay tuned for more information.

### **Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for December 2022:**

**<http://www.stpaulsodessa.org/VANCOOnlineGiving>**

12/25 St. Paul's General Fund

**Adult Bible Study** will begin as a hybrid meeting, (in-person and Zoom), October 16, 2022, in Fellowship Hall at 9:45 – 10:45 AM. Zoom Mtg. ID 839 3481 5178, Passcode 779997.

### **Flowers for Worship**

If you are interested in honoring a loved one with flowers at the altar on a particular Sunday, we are asking you to contact Alicia Blackwell, from Wildflowers by Alicia to place your order. Alicia can be reached at (302) 593-9884. Also, please email the church office so we make sure the information is added in the bulletin.

### **Compassionate Card Ministry**

The Compassionate Card Ministry is made up of 20 dedicated members of our congregation who create hand-made cards and encouraging messages to those in our directory, within our congregation, those on our prayer lists and others who are brought to our attention. Our purpose is to spread kindness and love to others through uplifting and personalized sentiments on hand-made cards. If you are not in our directory and would like to be added to our list, or if you know someone who would benefit from the blessing of a card, please contact Nancee Bleistine, nbleistine@yahoo.com or 609-217-1924.

### **Prayer and Praise Group Ministry**

Carole Harmon hosts a prayer circle, currently Thursday mornings at 10 AM - in person. Please contact Carole if you are interested in joining the group or have a special prayer request. You can also find prayer request cards and box on the corner shelf in the Narthex.

### **VANCO: Manage Your Giving Online**

Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Simply follow these easy steps:

- 1) Visit the church website at [www.stpaulsodessa.org](http://www.stpaulsodessa.org) and click on the VANCO Online Giving button to the left of the screen.
- 3) Click on the Link to Online Giving thru VANCO button, then
- 4) Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your RECURRING CONTRIBUTIONS.

### **Family Life**

**Children's Sunday School** will begin again on October 23, 2022, at 9:45 -10:45 AM via Zoom, ID 868 3752 1062, Passcode 817993.

## **Love Thy Neighbor Fund**

Our "Love Thy Neighbor Fund" was created to help those in need in the MOT community. This fund may support a time in someone's life when he/she may need a little kindness and generosity to help endure and survive a challenging situation. If you can donate, please make checks payable to St. Paul's UMC and then write in the memo area it is for "Love Thy Neighbor Fund." Please note, this fund is SEPARATE from the Yellow Hat. Thank you, Love Thy Neighbor Committee

## **Deep Roots**

Nadine Johnson & Karen Ellis continue to work with the "Deep Roots" mission. This group works with families who are disconnected through homelessness and provides transitional shelter and other services to families in need. They need your help as they continue to contact members of the church to help with making meals once a month feeding approximately 50+ individuals. Here's hoping you will be able to help us with this very important and necessary mission. Thanks so much! Contact Karen Ellis at [iluvbrmuda@gmail.com](mailto:iluvbrmuda@gmail.com) and Nadine Johnson at [nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com)

## **Our Daily Bread Food Donations**

214 N Broad St, Middletown, DE 19709

Volunteers Needed – day and evening hours and different areas of need, filling bags, handing out meals, etc. Volunteer Opportunities can be found at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COE4FAEA82CA3F5CF8-volunteer>. Contact Sue Holden, Missions Co-Chair, at 802-324-6167, [susieq2951@aol.com](mailto:susieq2951@aol.com), with any questions. Also, find information and volunteer sign-up forms on the website, <https://www.ourdailybreadmot.com>. **On-line Training Coming Soon!**

ODB is most thankful to all who donate either monetarily or in kind. Your generosity helps ODB feed those in our community who are facing food insecurity. Listed below are the items needed to stuff our side bags and other items that are needed on a regular basis. Donations can be dropped off on Tuesday from 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.

- Individual bottles of water
- Individual bags of salty snacks
- Individual packets of sweet snacks
- Individual fruit cups and/or applesauce
- Fresh fruit (apples, bananas, oranges)
- Boxes of breakfast cereal
- Boxes of mashed potatoes
- White bread
- Baked beans (large cans)
- Gallon size zip-loc bags
- Lg black garbage bags
- Cans of soup

Thank you for any and all kindnesses!

## **Neighborhood House**

Neighborhood House really appreciates St. Paul's ongoing support in so many ways. At this point, we are low on some items in the food pantry. These items are especially needed right now in our food pantry, though all donations are gladly accepted with the inventory being low now.

**We are really low on personal hygiene products as well as some food items:**

*Toiletries:*

Toilet paper

Shampoo

toothpaste, toothbrushes

deodorant

bath soap



*Nonperishables:*

Chef Boyardee, beef stew, Spam - **low on these**  
soap - **low on these**  
water  
jelly  
pancake mix/syrup  
snacks - cookies, crackers etc.

Donations can be left inside the Church. We look forward to another great year working together to feed the hungry. Thanks to all, Marilyn Hendershot, Family Services Specialist, Neighborhood House, Inc.

**PFLAG Meeting**

Meetings are held at 6:30 PM on the 3rd Thursday of each month, presently via Zoom. Please join us if you would like to be supported or offer support and please spread the word to all corners of our communities. We are currently working on a system which will help youth who have been rejected by their parents, find families who will help them. Please contact Mark Holden, (Mark@maholden.com) or call 802-279-8100.

**JOYS & CONCERNS:** If you know someone, you'd like to add to our prayer list, please email the church office or visit the church website ([www.stpaulsodessa.org](http://www.stpaulsodessa.org)) to complete a prayer request. **There is also a Prayer Box in the Narthex in which you can drop your completed request.** Please email the office when someone can be taken OFF the list. If you or a loved one needs a pastoral visit, please call or email the church office to schedule.

**Prayers for:** Noel Lukens, Matthew Smith, Naomi Betts, Jerrod Bolline, Sue Holden's sister, Betsey Snipes, Bill Smith, Beth, Matt & Louise Latocha, Carol Myers, Darryl Dillard, Kathy Golden, Jessica Schrum and Family, Joyce, Aunt to Angela Christian, Dave Corby, Kenzel Messick, David Dudgeon, Kimberly, Ike Guessford, Pat Williams, Jim Wilhelm and father, Seth Holden, Pastor Danese Collins, Daniel Moore, Amy, Robbi, Melissa Davis, Joanne Lambert, Donna's mother, Rob Knarr, Heather Myers and family, Frank.