



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

CCLI 11305346 and Streaming Lic.

First Sunday After Christmas, Epiphany Sunday & Celebration of the New Year

January 1, 2023, 11:00 AM Service

WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden, Photographer & Curator

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: God's love has been shown in a most wonderful way: a child has been born.

Many: We know him as Emmanuel, God with us. We know him as Jesus, the one who saves.

One: Today we light the Christ Candle, the candle which reminds us of Jesus.

Many: It is in the center of our wreath just as Jesus is the center of our lives.

All Singing: We honor Messiah with Christ's Candle flame. This candle reminds us glad tidings to proclaim. O come, all you faithful, rejoice in this light. As God comes among us, the Christians true light.

*OPENING HYMN:

What Child Is This

Red Hymnal 219

*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen

CHILDREN'S TIME:

This Is The Day

Red Hymnal 657

This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice, let us rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

Pastor Linda Ray shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 60: 1-6 (CEB)*

Arise! Shine! Your light has come;

the Lord's glory has shone upon you.

²Though darkness covers the earth

and gloom the nations,

the Lord will shine upon you;

God's glory will appear over you.

³ Nations will come to your light
and kings to your dawning radiance.
⁴ Lift up your eyes and look all around:
they are all gathered; they have come to you.
Your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters on caregivers' hips.
⁵ Then you will see and be radiant;
your heart will tremble and open wide,
because the sea's abundance will be turned over to you;
the nations' wealth will come to you.
⁶ Countless camels will cover your land,
young camels from Midian and Ephah.
They will all come from Sheba,
carrying gold and incense,
proclaiming the Lord's praises.

*HYMN OF PREPARATION:

There's A Song In The Air vs. 1,3,4

Red Hymnal 249

*GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 2: 1-12 (CEB)*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the territory of Judea during the rule of King Herod, magi came from the east to Jerusalem. ² They asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We've seen his star in the east, and we've come to honor him."

³ When King Herod heard this, he was troubled, and everyone in Jerusalem was troubled with him. ⁴ He gathered all the chief priests and the legal experts and asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ *You, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
by no means are you least among the rulers of Judah,
because from you will come one who governs,
who will shepherd my people Israel.*"^[a]

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you've found him, report to me so that I too may go and honor him." ⁹ When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² Because they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by another route.

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

THE MESSAGE:

Double Messages

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Giver of every gift, source of all goodness and light, we open the treasure chests of our hearts before you. We offer you gifts of gold, to care for those in need. We offer you gifts of love, to serve a suspicious world. Bless our gifts and our lives and use them to love and heal the world. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **1/1/23 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin.**

VIDEO PRESENTATION: **Yesprin - Christmas 2022**

*THE DOXOLOGY: *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow*

Red Hymnal 94

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS
PASTORAL PRAYER

Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: You asked for my hands, that you might use them for your purpose. I gave them for a moment, then withdrew them, for the work was hard. You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice. I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused. You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty. I closed them, for I did not want to see. You asked for my life, that you might work through me. I gave a small part, that I might not get too involved. Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you—only when it is convenient for me to do so, only in those places where it is safe to do so, and only with those who make it easy to do so. Father, forgive me, renew me, send me out as a usable instrument, that I might take seriously the meaning of your cross. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server – Joy Littell

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:

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

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!

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.

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: 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!

SENDING HYMN :

We Three Kings

Red Hymnal 254

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Carole Harmon

Audio/Video: Charlii Miller & John Littell, John Cate

Communion Officiant/Server: Joy Littell

Amy Brown, Director of Music Ministry

ASL Interpreter: Gail Garner

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor	lindaray@vaumc.org	(540) 207-1787
Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.	bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org	(302) 378-2420
Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer	alice.mullins@hotmail.com	(302) 293-9956
Amy Brown, Music Ministry Director	amyrowebrown@gmail.com	(480) 677-0910
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music	duanedillard@gmail.com	(443) 593-2470

ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 01/01	Worship Service 11:00 AM, No Sunday School & Adult Bible Study
Monday 01/02	Boy Scouts, 6-8 PM
Tuesday 01/03	Cub Scouts 6-8 PM
Wednesday 01/04	TOPS Mtg 6:00 PM.
Thursday 01/05	Prayer Group Ministry, Carole Harmon's Home, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Friday 01/06	10 AM Bible Study
Saturday 01/07	AA Mtg 7:00 PM

SPECIAL PRAYER REQUEST: Stephen George

Had lung transplant on Friday, December 23 at Temple Hospital in Philadelphia. Is currently in ICU and will be there for few days and will no doubt be in hospital for some time. Prayers needed for healing and comfort for him and family. It's been a long time and lots of appts, tests, etc. and was finally after a couple of years put on transplant list just couple weeks ago. Thank the good Lord for seeing his need - what a very special Christmas gift. Helen George

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 as of 12/18/22, 70 Pledges, \$181,852.

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.

Birthdays: January 1 – Alice Mullins; January 2 – Helen Downes, Marcia Wheeler; January 3 – Vickie Bush, Mike Kennedy, Joyce Nelson, Christopher Shaffer, Lynda Whitehead; January 4 – Cindra Holland; January 5 – Bill Hutchison; January 6 – Hap Bonham.

Anniversaries: N/A



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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 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 January 2023

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

01/8/23 Our Daily Bread (Sue Holden)

1/15/23 General Missions Fund

1/22/23 Special Olympics Polar Bear Plunge (Cathy Blanco, Melanie Blanco)

1/29/23 MOT Rise Against Hunger

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 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 and Nadine Johnson at 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, 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) 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, Stephen George.