

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. 21184487



Baptism of Our Lord Sunday

January 8, 2023, 11:00 AM Service
WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden, Photographer & Curator

*CALL TO WORSHIP: * *Indicates please stand in body or in spirit* Liturgist – Pastor Nancee Bleistine

One: Sing praises to the Lord. Sing of God's glory and strength.

Many: **God calls us over the waters and strengthens us for the journey.**

One: Sing praise to Christ. Sing of Christ's healing and love.

Many: **The waters of our baptism cleanse us, renewing our spirits and nursing our wounds.**

One: Sing praises to the Spirit. Sing of the Spirit's comfort and hope.

Many: **The flames of the Spirit are like a refiner's fire, purifying the soul to the glory of God.**

*OPENING HYMN: *This Is The Spirit's Entry Now* Red Hymnal 608

*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **Divine Spirit, descend upon us this day, as you descended upon Jesus on the day of his baptism. In the midst of our brokenness, we long to touch the healing of your Spirit, as you touch us with your love. In the presence of evil all around us, we yearn to be protected by the holy fire of your sustaining Spirit. As we remember our baptism this day, remind us that we are a people of the water, a people made one and whole, through the Spirit made known in Christ Jesus. Amen**

CHILDREN'S TIME: *Sanctuary* Black Hymnal 2164
Courtney Martin shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Isaiah 42:1-9 (CEB)*

But here is my servant, the one I uphold;
my chosen, who brings me delight.

I've put my spirit upon him;
he will bring justice to the nations.

²He won't cry out or shout aloud
or make his voice heard in public.

³He won't break a bruised reed;
he won't extinguish a faint wick,
but he will surely bring justice.

⁴He won't be extinguished or broken
until he has established justice in the land.

The coastlands await his teaching.

⁵God the Lord says—
the one who created the heavens,
the one who stretched them out,
the one who spread out the earth and its offspring,
the one who gave breath to its people
and life to those who walk on it—

⁶I, the Lord, have called you for a good reason.
I will grasp your hand and guard you,
and give you as a covenant to the people,

as a light to the nations,
7 to open blind eyes, to lead the prisoners from prison,
and those who sit in darkness from the dungeon.
8 I am the Lord;
that is my name;
I don't hand out my glory to others
or my praise to idols.
9 The things announced in the past—look—they've already happened,
but I'm declaring new things.
Before they even appear,
I tell you about them.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Baptized In Water

Black Hymnal 2248

*GOSPEL LESSON: *Matthew 3:13-17 (CEB)*

13 At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River so that John would baptize him. 14 John tried to stop him and said, "I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me?"

15 Jesus answered, "Allow me to be baptized now. This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness."

So John agreed to baptize Jesus. 16 When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. 17 A voice from heaven said, "This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him."

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

THE MESSAGE:

"Johnny Appleseed Christianity"

Pastor Linda Ray

RESPONSE TO THE WORD:

Baptismal Covenant IV

Red Hymnal 50

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

Pastor Linda Ray

Mighty One, speak words of blessing upon our offering this day, that nothing may hinder the good our gifts may do in your name. Give strength to your people, through the gifts we bring you, that all may know the glory of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

THE OFFERTORY

Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **Our Daily Bread (Sue Holden)**.

OFFERTORY HYMN:

He Is The Light

Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Red Hymnal 94

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia, Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: **We are incredibly stubborn, O Lord. We have entered the season in which Your Light has been given to the world, your blessings have been poured out on the world, and yet all we can think about is our own problems, our own needs, our own desires. Help us to desire you, Lord. Help us to yearn for your presence. Pour your baptismal waters over us again, cleansing us from our self-pity and arrogance. Nourish and heal us so that we may joyfully serve you. Wash away our jealousy, greed,**

and all negative thoughts and behaviors that stand in the way of our truly being the people you have called us to be. Again, let us receive the blessings offered in creation, in the birth and baptism of Jesus, and in the ministry of the saints of light. We ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server – Jonathan 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:

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!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN :

Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee vs. 1,3

Red Hymnal 89

Liturgist: Pastor Nancee Bleistine

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Jonathan Ray

Ushers:Ellie & Dick Leuliette, John & Patti Harmer, June Stemmler, John Harmon, Denis Shaffer, Laura Widger

ASL Interpreter: Gail Garner

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor

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Duane Dillard, Minister of Music

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 01/08	Worship Service 8:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Sunday School & Adult Bible Study 9:45
Monday 01/09	Bible Study 10 AM, Boy Scouts, 7 PM, Finance Mtg 6:30 PM
Tuesday 01/10	Women's Club of Odessa Program 12 PM, Cub Scouts 6 PM, Trustees Mtg 6:30 PM
Wednesday 01/11	ASL Classes 4:30 PM, TOPS Mtg 6 PM, Handbells Rehearsal 6 PM, Choir Rehearsal 7:10 PM
Thursday 01/12	Worship Arts 2 PM, Reconciling Ministries 6:30 PM
Friday 01/13	N/A
Saturday 01/14	AA Mtg 7 PM

NEW DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES – LAURA SEBASTIANO

It is with great pleasure that the St. Paul's SPRC Committee has found and hired a new Director of Music Ministries, Laura Sebastiano effective January 15, 2023. We look forward to working with and welcoming Laura and her family to St. Paul's.

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

THE WOMEN'S CLUB OF ODESSA PROGRAM January 10 – Cindra Holland, RDN, LDN, will present on making healthy food choices and emotional eating. Bring your lunch and drink. Meeting will start at 12:00. **Guest speaker will begin at 12:30. LOCATION: ST. PAUL'S FELLOWSHIP HALL, 406**

MAIN ST, ODESSA. Please RSVP by calling/texting Carol Sheats 302-242-3987. St. Paul's Church members are welcome to attend.

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 01/04/2023- 74 pledges - \$192,812.

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 12 – James Rowley, Andrew Widger

Anniversaries: January 9 – Mike & Ally Kennedy

Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for January 2023

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

01/1/23 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin

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



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 @Carole Harmon’s Home
- 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

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.

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, Heather Myers and family, Frank, Stephen George.