



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

Seventh Sunday of Easter
Ascension Sunday and Heritage Sunday

May 21, 2023, 11:00 AM Service

WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden, Photographer & Curator

PRELUDE

GREETING

MUSICAL REFLECTION: *Come, Now Is The Time To Worship* Handbell Choir

*CALL TO WORSHIP: Liturgist – Melissa Brooks

One: Let us gather in this space.

Many: We gather from many places.

One: Let us center ourselves for worship.

Many: We are one in the Spirit with joy in our hearts.

One: Let us receive God's blessing.

Many: God's blessing is ours. We are God's beloved. Amen

*OPENING HYMN: *Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee* Red Hymnal 89

*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **O God of earth and sky, as Jesus came among us in Bethlehem to raise us up to heaven, so today we recall his departing from us at Jerusalem to be in all places. Though He is hidden from our sight, enable us to abide in him by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, until his mercy and grace fill your whole creation. Breath of God, renew us in this time of worship. Help us set aside thoughts that trouble us. Help us pause the challenges of the world that taunt us. Pour your spirit within each one of us, that we may be re-spirited in this hour by your power and your grace. Amen**

CHILDREN'S TIME: *God Is So Good* vs. 1,2 Black Hymnal 2056

God is so good. God is so good. God is so good, God's so good to me. God cares for me. God cares for me. God cares for me, God's so good to me.

Brian McNelis shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 1:1-11* (CEB)

Theophilus, the first scroll I wrote concerned everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning, ² right up to the day when he was taken up into heaven. Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom. ⁴ While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: ⁵ John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶ As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?" ⁷ Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

⁹ After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood

next to them. ¹¹ They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Lord Be Glorified

Black Hymnal 2150

*GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 24: 44-53 (CEB)*

Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. ⁴⁶ He said to them, “This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Look, I’m sending to you what my Father promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with heavenly power.” ⁵⁰ He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. ⁵² They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. ⁵³ And they were continuously in the temple praising God.

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

THE MESSAGE:

“Casting Our Cares”

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Endless source of life, pour your blessing upon the gifts we bring before you. Bless our giving in your abundance for the restoration of all people. Through our offering, may those who are weary be energized; may those who feel forgotten find a home. With the joy of your grace filling our hearts, we pray. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today’s **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **Friends of Zoar (Steve Johnson)**.

CHORAL ANTHEM:

Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: **Life-giving God, we receive your blessing, but we don’t always feel worthy to receive it. Your call often confuses us and your love seems too generous. We worship and pray, yet we still count the times we fall short of what we think you expect of us. Your mercy is abundant, but we hesitate to open our hearts to receive it. Get our attention and draw us closer to you, that we may know the relief of your assurance. As we pray to you, hear our prayers. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server – Melissa Brooks

Reader 1: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Reader 1: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

Reader 1: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

Reader 1: 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, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life. 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.

Reader 2: Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. 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. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once we were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us from darkness into his marvelous light. 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."

Reader 1: (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!

Reader 2: 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.

Reader 2: Let us join our hearts and voices in the prayer that Jesus taught us:

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 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.)

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GO IN THE SPIRIT!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN:

Crown Him With Many Crowns

Red Hymnal 327

POSTLUDE

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Melissa Brooks

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Melissa Brooks

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

ASL Interpreter: Gail Garner

Director of Music Ministries: Laura Sebastiano

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor

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Laura Sebastiano, Director of Music Ministries

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(302)-480-3152

ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 05/21	Worship Services 8:30AM and 11AM, Adult Bible Study and Children's Bible Study 9:45 AM (Last Sunday for Children's), Alzheimer's Presentation 3-4PM.
Monday 05/22	Co-Ed Adult Bible Study Hybrid 10AM, Confirmation Classes 6:30PM, Boy Scouts 7PM
Tuesday 05/23	Cub Scouts 6PM
Wednesday 05/24	ASL Classes 4:30PM, TOPS Mtg 6PM, Handbells Rehearsal 6PM, Choir Rehearsal 7:10PM
Thursday 05/25	Prayer & Praise Group 10AM, SPRC 6:30PM
Friday 05/26	N/A
Saturday 05/27	AA Mtg 7PM

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Old Drawyers Church Annual Service Sunday, June 4 – Pastor Linda will preside, and the St. Paul's Choir will be singing!

June 4th is the first Summer Worship Service at 9AM. Only one Sunday service through the end of August.

Confirmation Sunday is June 11th.

Graduates Recognition Sunday is June 18th (and Fathers' Day). If you have graduating seniors and would like them to be recognized that Sunday and a short bio and photo included in the bulletin, please contact Bonnie in the Church Office. You can email the photo and bio together and send them to bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org. Deadline to submit is Thursday, June 8th.

CARE WORKERS READY TO WORK – Kathy Chas has contact information for anyone in need of a care-worker for their loved one. Kathy Chas can be contacted at her email, kmchas07@gmail.com, or phone 302-540-3046.

FROM THE TECH TEAM: Plans are being made to reduce the number of St Paul's archived live-streams and videos out there on YouTube. This will take place shortly after June 1, after which live-streams and videos will be archived for 12 months and then removed. If you desire for any live-stream or video to remain archived for a longer period, please let John or Charlii know.

Also, if you have an interest in preparing worship slides using PowerPoint or managing the live-stream or slide presentations at Sunday worship, please let us know. We will be happy to show you how it works and provide hands-on training. It's fun! Please consider volunteering.

CONFIRMATION CLASS is beginning Monday, April 24 at 6:30 p.m. Confirmation is open to anyone 12 years old or older who wants to learn more about their faith, more about the United Methodist Church, and move toward making a first-time public profession of faith and becoming a full member of St. Paul's UMC. The class will meet each Monday (except for Memorial Day) through June 12. Class activities will include discussion, reflection, field trips, service, and prayer. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in this class, please contact Pastor Linda (540-207-1787) or the church office. Looking forward to growing in faith together.

THE HEALTH MINISTRIES TEAM is presenting another seminar with information on Alzheimer's/Dementia in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, Sunday, May 21, 2023, from 3:00 - 4:00. This is open to all in our community.

Birthdays: May 26 – Al Calbazana, Hailey McNelis

Anniversaries: N/A

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.

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, Dave Corby, David Dudgeon, Dorothy Dudgeon, Kimberly, Ike Guessford, Pat Williams, Seth Holden, Daniel Moore, Donna's mother, Heather Myers and family, Frank, Stephen George, Hunter and family, Timmie, Carolyn Akin, Linda Botsford's father, Patty, Alice Mullins' brother Clarence Brooks, Debbie Foster, Nathan Kelsey, Eric Price, Bill Sims, Carol Nickle, Raymond 'Jim' McCall, family of Mark Smyth, Brian Wells, Lewis family, Joe Chas, Jonathan Brooks, Sally, Nancy, Stevie, Cheryl, Clydia, Joan, Ginny Lewis, Jan Corby, Ruth Neff, Mary Ingram's friend Maureen.

Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for May 2023

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

5/7/23 Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Del (Carolyn Stanley)

5/14/23 Urban Promise (Annual Conference) - Latch Key Kids, Wilmington, DE

5/21/23 Friends of Zoar (Steve Johnson)

5/28/23 Habitat for Humanity (Dawn Buckworth)

For anyone writing checks to the Church, and this includes Yellow Hat, Alice Mullins/Treasurer, would like to remind everyone that the checks need to be made to ST. PAUL'S UMC.

The checks/cash/Vanco on-line donations collected on each Sunday get deposited to the Church account and then the total amount for that Sunday's Yellow Hat Mission is then sent to that Mission Charity via a check written by Alice from St. Paul's account. Please just note on your check to which Yellow Hat you want to donate.

If you write the check to the Yellow Hat or any other organization, it cannot be deposited into St. Paul's Funds account. Hoping this message clarifies our process, thanks to everyone for being generous in their giving!



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)

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

Reconciling Ministries Informational Meetings

The Reconciling Committee will be having a book review on “Living Faithfully, Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church” starting February 9th at 6:30PM. The meeting will be a hybrid meeting, Pastor Linda will be sending out the link prior to the meeting. This will be a four-part study with the next three meetings being the second Thursday of March, April and May. The subject of the February meeting, Chapter 1, "IS THE PRACTICE OF HOMOSEXUALITY INCOMPATIBLE WITH CHRISTIAN TEACHING" Contact Mark Holden, 302) 378-9158, or mark@maholden.com, if you need a copy of the book. Hope to see you there!

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. **The final Sunday of Children's Sunday School is May 21, 2023.**

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 11:30AM

- 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 kindness!

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.

Currently we are really low on personal hygiene products as well as some food items:

- 1. Bottled water**
- 2. Toilet paper, Toothpaste, Soap, Shampoo & conditioner**
- 3. Peanut butter & jelly (medium size)**
- 4. Pasta sauce**
- 5. Tuna/Tuna Helper**
- 6. Hamburger Helper**

These non-perishables are needed to keep our pantry stocked:

Chef Boyardee, beef stew, Spam
pancake mix/syrup
snacks - cookies, crackers etc.

ADDITIONALLY, THERE IS ALWAYS A NEED FOR ADULT SIZED DISPOSABLE DIAPERS AS WELL AS FOR BABIES/CHILDREN IN SIZES 4, 5, AND 6, AND WIPES. WE HAVE NUMEROUS MOMS WITH BABIES AND TODDLERS WHO TAKE THEIR MONEY FOR FOOD AND BILLS TO BUY THEM.

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.