



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

**Baptism of Our Lord Sunday**  
**Human Relations Day**  
**January 14, 2024, 8:30 AM Service**  
**WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE**

**WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES**

**GATHERING MUSIC AND PHOTOS:**

Duane Dillard Music Ministry, Mark Holden - Photographer & Curator, Ellie Leuliette - Liturgist

**GATHERING WORDS:**

One: In the beginning...

**Many: God.**

One: In the beginning...

**Many: God's Spirit.**

One: In the beginning...

**Many: God's Word.**

One: In the beginning...

**Many: a new day.**

One: A new beginning for every day.

**Many: God's gift of creation.**

**\*PRAISE AND WORSHIP:**

*To God Be the Glory*

Red Hymnal 98

**\*OPENING PRAYER:** (all praying): **God of power and majesty, you call forth creation, acting with strength and power. You are mighty and powerful, and yet you care for us, recreating us for your work in the world. We take time from our busy schedules to reflect on the holiness of baptism. We stand amazed at the wondrous works of God. God's goodness radiates through us as we experience the joy of coming into fellowship. We come with humble and willing hearts. We remember our baptism and pray for all who will be baptized. We pray that God will bring us and them into sweet fellowship found through baptism and remind us of the truth that lies in its holiness. Send the power of your Spirit among us, that we might become agents of your love and peace. Amen**

**CHILDREN'S TIME:**

*Peace for the Children*

Green Hymnal 3125

Courtney Martin 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:** *Gen 1:1-5 (CEB)*

When God began to create the heavens and the earth—<sup>2</sup> the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God's wind swept over the waters—<sup>3</sup> God said, "Let there be light." And so light appeared.<sup>4</sup> God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness.<sup>5</sup> God named the light Day and the darkness Night.

There was evening and there was morning: the first day.

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Mark 1:4-11 (CEB)*

John the Baptist was in the wilderness calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. <sup>5</sup> Everyone in Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to the Jordan River and were being baptized by John as they confessed their sins. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> He announced, "One stronger than I am is coming after me. I'm not even worthy to bend over and loosen the strap of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

<sup>9</sup> About that time, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and John baptized him in the Jordan River. <sup>10</sup> While he was coming up out of the water, Jesus saw heaven splitting open and the Spirit, like a dove, coming down on him. <sup>11</sup> And there was a voice from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I dearly love; in you I find happiness."

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

HYMN OF PREPARATION: *Here I Am, Lord* Red Hymnal 593

THE MESSAGE: "By Water And The Spirit" Pastor Linda Ray

BAPTISMAL COVENANT IV Red Hymnal 50

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

### WE GIVE THANKS

#### OFFERTORY REMINDERS

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

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **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 – Ellie Leuliette

**Reader 2 (singing)** :The Lord be with you.

*Communion Setting 2257-a*

**ALL: And also with you.**

**Reader 2:** Lift up your hearts.

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

**Reader 2:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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

**Reader 1:** God of beginnings, you are always creating. At the very beginning, you sent your Spirit to bring order out of chaos. You spoke and there was light. You continued your active presence in our world, over and over calling forth newness. When we followed our own desires, ignoring the promises of your word, you sent prophets to speak of life and peace. You never gave up on us through the power of your Spirit. 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!**

**Reader 2:** You spoke through the prophet, John the Baptizer. In the wilderness, John spoke your word, calling people to repentance and declaring that one who is more powerful is coming. That one was Jesus. As he emerged from the waters of the Jordan, you proclaimed, “You are my son, the Beloved. With you I am well pleased.” Jesus continued to live as your word in the world. He built a community of God’s beloved persons, welcoming everyone. He offered a word of hope and encouragement to the discouraged. He challenged the powerful to work for justice. In the life and ministry of Jesus, there was a new beginning for creation.

(Lifting the bread) Before Jesus was betrayed, he gathered with his friends for a meal. Taking the bread, Jesus gave thanks to you and broke it. He gave it to his friends, saying, “This is my life offered for you. Let this meal feed you. Remember me as you eat.”

Reader 1: (Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and shared it with his followers, saying, “This is the cup of the new covenant, given for the forgiveness of sins. It is a gift for you and for all people. It is my love offered for you. Drink of this and remember 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:

*Communion Setting 2257-c*

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

**Reader 2:** God of glory, send your Spirit on these gifts of bread and cup. May they become a new beginning for our lives, by feeding us for your work in the world. Send your Spirit upon us, gathered at this table. May we become the living body of Christ, expressing your love in word and deed. Make us one with Jesus, and one with each other, as we walk in the light, singing your praises. Through your child Jesus, and by the power of your Holy Spirit in your Church, all glory and strength, power and majesty are yours, now and forever.

*Communion Setting 2257-d*

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

**Reader 2:** Let us join our hearts and voices in the prayer that God continues to teach 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.**

COMMUNION SONG: *Here Is Bread, Here Is Wine* Black Hymnal 2266

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

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

CLOSING MUSIC: *I Am Thine, O Lord* Red Hymnal 419

***SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY***

Liturgist: Ellie Leuliette

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Ellie Leuliette

Duane Dillard, Music Ministry

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:**

<b>Sunday 01/14</b>	<b>Worship Services 8:30AM and 11AM ASL &amp; Livestreaming, Adult &amp; Children's Bible Study</b>
<b>Monday 01/15</b>	<b>Confirmation Class 6PM, Boy Scouts 7PM</b>
<b>Tuesday 01/16</b>	<b>ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Leadership Mtg 6:30 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday 01/17</b>	<b>TOPS Mtg 6PM, Bell 6PM &amp; Choir 7PM Rehearsals</b>
<b>Thursday 01/18</b>	<b>10AM Prayer and Praise Group</b>
<b>Friday 01/19</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Saturday 01/20</b>	<b>AA Mtg 7PM</b>

**FINANCE: To Date: Stewardship 2023 for 2024 Budget, 70 Pledges = \$197,810.** This year, we budgeted \$206,000 for pledged income and we are so close! A HUGE thanks to ALL who are pledging their support of St. Paul's with their financial gifts.

**CONFIRMATION CLASS MEETING:** January 15, 2024, 6-7:30PM in Fellowship Hall. This will be a meeting to discuss Confirmation, the dates to meet, etc. and moving forward. Contact Pastor Linda Ray for more information or the Church Office.

**BIRTHDAYS:** January 17 – Michael Lynn Whitehead; January 18 – Kurt Foreman; January 19 – Mary Ingram; January 20 – Carl Ravilious

**ANNIVERSARIES:** January 20 – Dick & Ellie Leuliette

**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, David Dudgeon, Dorothy Dudgeon, Carolyn Akin, Jonathan Brooks, Mary Ingram's friend Maureen, John Guy, Maria Gregors, Levi Schrum and family, Matthew Smith, Marilyn Hendershot, Allison, Dennis Downes, Ty Somersfield – cousin to Don Mueller, Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Liz Ravilious – Carl Ravilious' step-mother, Ethan Porter, Ann Newswanger, Louise Sommer, George, Dylan Green, John St. Jean, Chris Chappelle, Blain Shoun, Sally Sutton's neighbor – Dottie, Kevin Quiveors – Al Calbazanna's brother-in-law, Thomas Maloney's mother, family of Mary Thompson who recently passed, Mary Ingram's mother-in-law.

**Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for January 2024**

**1/7/24 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin**

**1/14/24 Our Daily Bread (Sue Holden)**

**1/21/24 General Missions Fund**

**1/28/24 Special Olympics Polar Bear Plunge (Cathy Blanco, Melanie Tokash)**

*Please make sure ALL checks are made payable to St. Paul's UMC, including checks for the Yellow Hat missions, writing the organization's name on the memo line.*

*All donations are collected, recorded, entered in the system, and deposited into the Church's operating account on a weekly basis. Also, on a weekly basis, a check is mailed to the specified yellow hat organization for the total amount collected.*

*It is very important that donations be placed in the offering plate, yellow hat or mailed to St. Paul's UMC. You are also welcome to drop off donations in the grey box just inside the side door to the Church, making sure it is secured in an envelope with your name on the front. This is to guarantee acknowledgement of your donations when the yearly contribution statement is sent for tax purposes.*

*Thank you all for your continued support for St. Paul's as we are growing in our faith through generosity.*

*Alice Mullins, Treasurer*



## 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, 9 AM-2 PM

- Boy Scouts –Mondays 7-8:30 PM
- Cub Scouts –Tuesdays 6-8 PM
- 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 6 PM
- St. Paul's Choir Rehearsal – Wednesdays 7 PM
- AA Meeting – Saturdays 7 PM

### **MONTHLY GATHERINGS**

- Finance Meeting – 2nd Monday 6:30 PM
- Trustees Meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> Monday 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 – TBD

**Adult Bible Study** will resume Sunday, September 17, 2023 at 9:45AM.

**Children’s Sunday School** will resume Sunday, September 17, 2023 at 9:45AM.

### **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](mailto: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.

### **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 11:30AM

- 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](mailto: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.