



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

## Epiphany Sunday

January 7, 2024, 11:00 AM Service

WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden & June Stemmler, Photographer & Curator

Liturgist - Jeanne Buckworth

### GREETING

#### LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Christ's light is shining,

**Many: calling us to respond with joy.**

One: Christ's light is shining,

**Many: calling us to worship and praise**

One: We light the Christ candle rejoicing that a Savior is born.

**Many: A savior is born, indeed. Joy to the world! Light of the world!**

**All Singing: O holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray. Cast out our sin and enter in be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels; the great glad tidings tell. O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

\*OPENING HYMN:

*We Three Kings*

Red Hymnal 254

\*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): God of stars and angels, God of sheep and lambs, God of abundance and grace: You know us well, better than we know ourselves. You hear us cry "Gloria!" and "Praise!" And you watch us tear things apart with our words and deeds. You hear us say "Thy will be done" and "Use me, O God" And you watch us do nothing in response to cries for help. You know us, and you love us, and you forgive. Hear us now say, "Help us to change; turn us around, Make us more loving and courageous and hopeful." This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CHILDREN'S TIME:

*This Little Light Of Mine*

Red Hymnal 585

*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.*

Susie Cate 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.

<sup>2</sup>Though darkness covers the earth  
and gloom the nations,  
the Lord will shine upon you;  
God's glory will appear over you.

<sup>3</sup>Nations will come to your light  
and kings to your dawning radiance.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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:

*What Child Is This*

Red Hymnal 219

\*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. <sup>2</sup> 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."

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

<sup>6</sup> *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.*"

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the magi and found out from them the time when the star had first appeared. <sup>8</sup> 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." <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> 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:

"My Soul Awaits"

Pastor Linda Ray

### WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Giver of every good 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 **El Ayudante Child, Yesprin.**

CHORAL ANTHEM

\*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: **Merciful God, grant us the grace to behold your glory and offer us the assurance that your loving light will not burn us. Remove the lampshades of fear and shame that hide our**

**light. Dust off the cobwebs of doubt and despair that shadow our light. Grant us the confidence that we too can shine your light in our world. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray  
Officiant Server- Bruce Ray

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. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in our image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, our love remained steadfast, You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your 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.**

Reader 2: You sent Jesus to us, the light of the world. Jesus promised that those who followed him would never walk in darkness, but would have the light of life. The light of his life shone on all people, revealing the truth of your love. Jesus fed the hungry, cured the sick, ate with sinners, and proclaimed your truth.

(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, "Take and eat. I am with you now and forever. 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:

**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 cup that they may be for us the living presence of Jesus Christ, light of the world, our hope for all creation. Make us one with Jesus, and one with each other, as we walk in the light, singing your praises. Through Jesus Christ, light of the world, and through the Holy Spirit, radiance divine, all praise is yours, eternal God, now and forever, world without end.

**ALL: AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.**

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

## WE GO IN THE SPIRIT!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN:

*Angels From The Realms Of Glory*

Red Hymnal 220

POSTLUDE

### SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Jeanne Buckworth

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Bruce Ray

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

ASL Interpreter: Gail Garner

Director of Music Ministries: Thomas Maloney, Organist/Accompanist: Jin Kyung Seo

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor

[lindaray@vaumc.org](mailto:lindaray@vaumc.org)

(540) 207-1787

Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.

[bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org](mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org)

(302) 378-2420

Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer

[stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org](mailto:stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org)

(302) 293-9956

Duane Dillard, Minister of Music

[duanedillard@gmail.com](mailto:duanedillard@gmail.com)

(443) 593-2470

Thomas Maloney, Director of Music

[thomaseamaloney@gmail.com](mailto:thomaseamaloney@gmail.com)

Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist

[jinksblue@gmail.com](mailto:jinksblue@gmail.com)

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

<b>Sunday 01/07</b>	<b>Worship Services 8:30AM ASL &amp; Livestreaming and 11AM, Adult &amp; Children's Bible Study</b>
---------------------	---

<b>Monday 01/08</b>	<b>Trustee Meeting 6:30PM</b>
---------------------	-------------------------------

<b>Tuesday 01/09</b>	<b>ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM</b>
----------------------	----------------------------

<b>Wednesday 01/10</b>	<b>TOPS Mtg 6PM, Bell 6PM &amp; Choir 7PM Rehearsals</b>
------------------------	--

<b>Thursday 01/11</b>	<b>10AM Prayer and Praise Group</b>
-----------------------	-------------------------------------

<b>Friday 01/12</b>	<b>N/A</b>
---------------------	------------

<b>Saturday 01/13</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 11 – Jennifer Reed; January 12 – Andrew Widger

**ANNIVERSARIES:** January 9 – Mike & Ally Kennedy

**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 Somersshield – 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.

## 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**  
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, 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** 9:45AM--hybrid

**Children's Sunday School** 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.