



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

## Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany

February 4, 2024, 8:30 AM Service, ASL and Livestreaming  
WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

### WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

#### GATHERING MUSIC AND PHOTOS:

Duane Dillard Music Ministry, Mark Holden - Photographer & Curator, Melissa Brooks – Liturgist, Gail Garner-ASL Interpreter

#### GATHERING WORDS

One: People of God, welcome! Surely God is in this place!

**Many: We come to worship and to rest in God's presence.**

One: Breathe deep for the goodness of God surrounds us.

**Many: The Holy One who sustains the universe is near.**

One: When we are tired, worn down, and carrying heavy burdens, God is with us.

**Many: God strengthens us that we might help carry one another's burden.**

One: So, let us join together in wonder and thanksgiving for God's love that lifts us up on wings like eagles.

**Many: Thanks be to God! Amen**

#### PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

*My Life Is in You, Lord*

Black Hymnal 2032

\*OPENING PRAYER: (all praying): **Holy God, even in our pursuit of safety and security, we yearn to seek justice for the poor and to defend the downtrodden from the privilege of the powerful. Give us the heart of Jesus, that we may care for the sick and rescue the perishing. Give us the spirit of Christ, that we may spend time in prayer and keep your path before our feet. Give us the love of your Son, that we may be instruments of your peace. Amen**

#### CHILDREN'S TIME:

*Peace for the Children*

Green Hymnal 3125

Ellie Leuliette 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: *Isaiah 40:21-31 (CEB)*

Don't you know? Haven't you heard?

Wasn't it announced to you from the beginning?

Haven't you understood since the earth was founded?

<sup>22</sup> God inhabits the earth's horizon—

its inhabitants are like locusts—

stretches out the skies like a curtain

and spreads it out like a tent for dwelling.

<sup>23</sup> God makes dignitaries useless

and the earth's judges into nothing.

<sup>24</sup> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely is their shoot rooted in the earth  
when God breathes on them, and they dry up;  
the windstorm carries them off like straw.

<sup>25</sup> So to whom will you compare me,  
and who is my equal? says the holy one.

<sup>26</sup> Look up at the sky and consider:  
Who created these?  
The one who brings out their attendants one by one,  
summoning each of them by name.

Because of God's great strength  
and mighty power, not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, Jacob,  
and declare, Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the LORD,  
my God ignores my predicament"?

<sup>28</sup> Don't you know? Haven't you heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the creator of the ends of the earth.  
He doesn't grow tired or weary.

His understanding is beyond human reach,

<sup>29</sup> giving power to the tired  
and reviving the exhausted.

<sup>30</sup> Youths will become tired and weary,  
young men will certainly stumble;

<sup>31</sup> but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength;  
they will fly up on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not be tired;  
they will walk and not be weary.

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Mark 1:29-39 (CEB)*

<sup>29</sup> After leaving the synagogue, Jesus, James, and John went home with Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed, sick with a fever, and they told Jesus about her at once. <sup>31</sup> He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she served them. <sup>32</sup> That evening, at sunset, people brought to Jesus those who were sick or demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered near the door. <sup>34</sup> He healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases, and he threw out many demons. But he didn't let the demons speak, because they recognized him. <sup>35</sup> Early in the morning, well before sunrise, Jesus rose and went to a deserted place where he could be alone in prayer. <sup>36</sup> Simon and those with him tracked him down. <sup>37</sup> When they found him, they told him, "Everyone's looking for you!" <sup>38</sup> He replied, "Let's head in the other direction, to the nearby villages, so that I can preach there too. That's why I've come." <sup>39</sup> He traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and throwing out demons.

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

HYMN OF PREPARATION: *My Faith Looks Up to Thee*

Red Hymnal 452

THE MESSAGE: "With Wings Like Eagles"

Pastor Linda Ray

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 **MOT Rise Against Hunger.**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying):** Lord, today we confess that we often live as those who have never heard of you. We plan and strategize as though the outcome depended solely upon us. We worry like those who have no advocate. We ask for forgiveness in places where we continue to grasp at power, forgetting that you are the Power. We ask for forgiveness where we have been seeking glory when all glory belongs to you. We ask for forgiveness for not leaning on you when we have felt weak, or powerless or alone. Teach us how to live more like those who belong to you and less like those who belong to the world. Amen

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray  
Officiant Server – Melissa Brooks

**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:** 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:

*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 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:

*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:** 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.

*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: *Lord, I Want to Be a Christian* Red Hymnal 402  
(*The congregation will come forward to partake of the bread and cup.*)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

CLOSING MUSIC: *I'm So Glad Jesus Lifted Me* Black Hymnal 2151

**SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

Liturgist: Melissa Brooks

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Melissa Brooks

Duane Dillard, Music Ministry

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor	<a href="mailto:lindaray@vaumc.org">lindaray@vaumc.org</a>	(540) 207-1787
Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.	<a href="mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org">bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org</a>	(302) 378-2420
Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer	<a href="mailto:stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org">stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org</a>	(302) 293-9956
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music	<a href="mailto:duanedillard@gmail.com">duanedillard@gmail.com</a>	(443) 593-2470
Thomas Maloney, Director of Music	<a href="mailto:thomaseamaloney@gmail.com">thomaseamaloney@gmail.com</a>	
Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist	<a href="mailto:jinksblue@gmail.com">jinksblue@gmail.com</a>	

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

<b>Sunday 02/04</b>	<b>Worship Services 8:30AM ASL &amp; Livestreaming and 11AM, Adult &amp; Children's Bible Study, Pak-A-Sack Sunday</b>
<b>Monday 02/05</b>	<b>Confirmation Class 6PM, Boy Scouts 7PM, Trustees Mtg 6:30PM</b>
<b>Tuesday 02/06</b>	<b>ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM,</b>
<b>Wednesday 02/07</b>	<b>TOPS Mtg 6PM, Bell 6PM &amp; Choir 7PM Rehearsals</b>
<b>Thursday 02/08</b>	<b>10AM Prayer and Praise Group</b>
<b>Friday 02/09</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Saturday 02/10</b>	<b>AA Mtg 7PM</b>

**SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY:** February 11! Don't forget to bring your cans of soup in and put them in your Super Bowl's favorite team's box! Or just any one of them if you don't care! All donations of soup will be then donated to Our Dail Bread in Middletown.

**FINANCE: Stewardship 2023 for 2024 Budget To Date: 72 Pledges = \$199,530**

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:** February 5, 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:** February 4 – Dalton Ashley, Bob Urstadt; February 5 – Vivian Mastin; February 7 – Dave Corby, Maddie Kennedy, Zach Pompeo; February 8 – Steve Anderson, Eleanor Cleaver, Sam Moore Jr.; February 9 – Ben Shaffer; February 10 – Chris Chappelle.

**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, 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, Louise Sommer, George, Dylan Green, Chris Chappelle, Blain Shoun, Sally Sutton's neighbor – Dottie, Kevin Quiveors – Al Calbazanna's brother-in-law, Thomas Maloney's mother, Mary Ingram's mother-in-law, John Littell, Sally Sutton.

### **Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for February 2024**

**02/04/2024** *MOT Rise Against Hunger*

**02/11/2024** *Souper Bowl Sunday/Maggie McCombs (Kathy Chas)*

**02/18/2024** *American Heart Association*

**02/25/2024** *UMCOR International for Turkey and Syria Relief Fund*

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.