



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

First Sunday in Lent
February 18, 2024, 11:00AM Service
WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES
Mark Holden & June Stemmler, Photographer & Curator

PRELUDE

GREETING

GATHERING WORDS: Liturgist – Steve Johnson

One: Lenten travelers, when you feel the security of God's love, affirmation of God's call, and covered in God's grace...

Many: God comes near.

One: When you feel deserted and alone, starving and parched for a caring hand or an encouraging word...

Many: God comes near.

One: When you feel emboldened to act, inspired to speak, energized to live as bearers of the good news that the kingdom of God is here...

Many: God comes near.

One: In all seasons of our lives, God comes near to us and does not forsake us.

Many: We gather to come near to God whose ever-present love remains near no matter where our journey takes us.

*OPENING HYMN: *This Is My Father's World* Red Hymnal 144

*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **Lord Jesus, as we follow you on your path to the cross, guide our steps in the way of hope. By grace through faith in your holy name, we have forgiveness for our sins and the sure and certain hope of eternal life in your presence. When we are struggling with fear or loss, set your cross before us as a sign of the hope that we have. Lead us to be witnesses for you and to share the hope you bring with everyone we meet, so that they, too, in the power of the Holy Spirit, may come to believe in you and worship you as Lord. Hear our prayer, and accept our praise, dear Savior. Amen**

CHILDREN'S TIME: *Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying* Black Hymnal 2193

Lord, listen to your children praying. Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying. Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

Courtney Martin shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Genesis 9:8-17 (CEB)*

⁸God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹"I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, ¹⁰and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you.^[a] ¹¹I will set up my covenant with you so that never again will all life be cut off by floodwaters. There will never again be a flood to destroy the earth."

¹²God said, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I am drawing up between me and you and every living thing with you, on behalf of every future generation. ¹³I have placed my bow in the clouds; it will be the symbol of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵I

will remember the covenant between me and you and every living being among all the creatures. Floodwaters will never again destroy all creatures. ¹⁶The bow will be in the clouds, and upon seeing it I will remember the enduring covenant between God and every living being of all the earth's creatures." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth."

HYMN OF PREPARATION: *Lord Who Throughout These Forty Days* Red Hymnal 269

*GOSPEL LESSON: *Mark 1:9-15 (CEB)*

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

¹²At once the Spirit forced Jesus out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan. He was among the wild animals, and the angels took care of him. ¹⁴After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee announcing God's good news, ¹⁵saying, "Now is the time! Here comes God's kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news!"

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

THE MESSAGE: "Guided To The Cross: Guided To Hope" Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Trustworthy God, Thank you for trusting us with this good earth. Thank you for sharing your gifts with us. Help us live up to your trust, even as we learn to place our trust in you. Bless the gifts that we share, that they may honor the generosity you have shown us. With gratitude we pray. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports *American Heart Association*.

CHORAL ANTHEM *Walk Worthy* Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY: Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: **Almighty God, we have the cross before us to guide us, but we often turn away from following in the steps of Jesus. We listen to the temptations of the world instead of gladly hearing your Word. We turn from the hope we have in Jesus to follow our own sinful desires. Have mercy on us and forgive us our sins. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION: Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server- Steve Johnson

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 brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us commandments and made us your covenant people. When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice.

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. When you gave Jesus to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, when he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. 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. Now, when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that during these forty days of Lent we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

(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 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 glory and honor is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

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:

Shall We Gather At The River

Red Hymnal 723

POSTLUDE

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Steve Johnson

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Steve Johnson

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

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor
Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.
Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music
Thomas Maloney, Director of Music
Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist

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ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 02/18	Worship Services 8:30AM ASL & Livestreaming and 11AM, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM
Monday 02/19	Boy Scouts 7PM
Tuesday 02/20	ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Leadership Mtg. 6:3PM
Wednesday 02/21	Lunch and Bible Study-Noon, Tree Of Life, 4:30 PM Deep Roots, 5 PM Confirmation Class, TOPS Mtg 6PM, Handbell Choir 6 PM. Chancel Choir 7 PM
Thursday 02/22	10AM Prayer and Praise Group
Friday 02/24	N/A
Saturday 02/25	AA Mtg 7PM

LENTEN SERVICES: Each Wednesday, beginning Feb. 21 there will be a soup lunch and Bible study as a combined effort with Tree of Life. The first three will be at Tree of Life, the last three will be at St. Paul's. The topic will be "Holy Lament" and will look at grief and struggle from a biblical and a personal perspective. The gathering will begin at noon. Soup, salad and beverages will be provided. If you would like to bring additional items for yourself, please feel free to do so.

THE NEXT JOY EVENT: will be held on Saturday, March 2nd. We will be touring Barratt's Chapel & Museum of Methodism in Frederica, DE, beginning at 10:00 am. Details about carpooling and lunch afterwards will be forthcoming; however, we need to know if you are interested in joining us. If so, please contact Nadine @ nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com or Karen @ illuvbrmuda@gmail.com by Monday, February 26th.

FINANCE: To Date: Stewardship 2023 for 2024 Budget, 74 Pledges = \$204,230. 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.

BIRTHDAYS: February 18– Billy Mullins, David Sheats; February 20 – Tyler Halloran; February 22 – Sue Holden; February 23 – Nadine Johnson, Max Sydnor

ANNIVERSARIES: February 18 – Joe & Vivian Mastin; February 22 – Ronnie & Charlotte Miller

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, Marilyn Hendershot, Allison, Dennis Downes, Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Liz Ravilious – Carl Ravilious' step-mother, 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, Steve Johnson, Faye Taylor's nephew Matthew Smith, and Brenda Shaffer's nephew, Ethan Porter, Don Mueller and family on the passing of his cousin, Ty Somersfield, Dawn Buckworth, Thomas Maloney, Helen George, John Littell

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
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 – 1st 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 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.

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.