



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 in Lent**  
March 17, 2024, 11:00AM Service  
**WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE**

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

PRELUDE AND GREETING

GATHERING WORDS:

Liturgist – Lynda Whitehead

One: Are you feeling tired and worn out?

**Many: Call on the name of the Lord.**

One: Are mistakes from the past weighing you down?

**Many: Come to the fount of living waters.**

One: Are you the person you wish to be?

**Many: Seek God's help and it shall be granted.**

One: Are you looking for a better path?

**Many: Ask Christ to show you the way.**

\*OPENING HYMN:

*Must Jesus Bear The Cross Alone*

Red Hymnal 424

\*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **Engraver of the human heart, we long for your law of love to burst forth with every beat of our hearts. Work within us this day, that the majesty of your love may shine through us in everything we say and do. Put a new and right spirit within us, O Lord, that we may leave our failings behind and embrace the glory of our salvation, through Christ our Lord. Amen**

CHILDREN'S TIME:

*Thy Word*

Red Hymnal 601

*Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Now I will not forget your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering. Jesus be my guide and hold me to your side, and I will love you to the end. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Brian McNelis shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Jeremiah 31:31-34* (CEB)

The time is coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. <sup>32</sup> It won't be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant with me even though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> No, this is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel after that time, declares the LORD. I will put my Instructions within them and engrave them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> They will no longer need to teach each other to say, "Know the LORD!" because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD; for I will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sins.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

*Glorify Thy Name*

Black Hymnal 2016

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *John 12:20-33* (CEB)

Some Greeks were among those who had come up to worship at the festival. <sup>21</sup> They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and made a request: “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” <sup>22</sup> Philip told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, “The time has come for the Human One to be glorified. <sup>24</sup> I assure you that unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it can only be a single seed. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup> Those who love their lives will lose them, and those who hate their lives in this world will keep them forever. <sup>26</sup> Whoever serves me must follow me. Wherever I am, there my servant will also be. My Father will honor whoever serves me. <sup>27</sup> “Now *I am deeply troubled*. What should I say? ‘Father, save me from this time’? No, for this is the reason I have come to this time. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” <sup>29</sup> The crowd standing there heard and said, “It’s thunder.” Others said, “An angel spoke to him.” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “This voice wasn’t for my benefit but for yours. <sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment of this world. Now this world’s ruler will be thrown out. <sup>32</sup> When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to me.” (<sup>33</sup> He said this to show how he was going to die.)

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 Perseverance” Pastor Linda Ray

### WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: With hearts washed clean and with spirits made new, we celebrate the joy of your salvation, O God. May the tithes and offerings we share this day reflect the law of love you have written on our hearts. May these gifts bear the fruit of your Spirit, and may they bless those who need it most. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today’s **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports *3/17/24 Harvest Outreach People Project Food Delivery Wilmington (Boxes of Food/Pastor Linda)*.

CHORAL ANTHEM *Behold The Lamb* Chancel Choir  
*Congregation join in singing as directed by Thomas Maloney*

*Crown him with many crowns, the lamb upon the throne. Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own. Awake, my soul and sing of him who died for thee and hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.*

\*THE DOXOLOGY: Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: **Almighty God, we are called to persevere in our obedience to your will and your ways, but instead we sin against you. We do not walk in your ways or love others as we should. We are more interested in fulfilling our own desires than serving others and being faithful to your Word. Have mercy on us and forgive us our sins. Teach us, Lord to follow you in faithfulness. Teach us Lord, to keep our focus on you, even when our days are challenging. Jesus, set your cross before us to guide us to persevere in faith. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION: Pastor Linda Ray  
Officiant Server- Lynda Whitehead

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: Holy God of wisdom and power, you alone are worthy of our worship. At your word, creation came into being: stars danced, sunlight gleamed on water, and the earth was filled with growing things. You gave us your commandments to guide us in the ways of justice and righteousness. When we failed to obey your words,

choosing greed and self-interest over compassion and caring, your love for us remained steadfast. You sent prophets to call us back to you, reminding us that your ways are filled with abundance. Your scriptures kept your words before us, as generations heard your call. And so, with all of creation, and the great company of heaven we praise you as we 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 child Jesus Christ. In his life and teaching, he showed us your ways. Jesus welcomed all people, offering forgiveness and a new beginning. He offered healing to aching bodies and spirits. Jesus shared your kingdom, where love and righteousness rule. Following your laws, he dared to challenge places of greed and abuse.

(Lifting the bread) Jesus sat with his friends at the table, sharing a meal. Jesus took the bread, lifted it to you, and blessed it. Jesus broke the bread and gave it to his friends, saying: "This bread is my life, a gift for you and for many. Eat this bread and remember me."

Reader 1: (Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and shared it with his friends, saying, "Drink from this cup. This cup represents my love, a sign of the new covenant. It brings forgiveness from sin as it quenches your thirst. Drink from this cup 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 Spirit on us gathered at this table and on these gifts of bread and cup. May they become for us the living Christ, renewing us for your work. May we become the body of Christ, sent forth into the world as the living presence of love incarnate, serving creation with joy. Transform us in the power of the Spirit and unite us with Jesus, that we may continue his ministry of peace and reconciliation. Through your child, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Holy 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:

*Take Up Thy Cross*

Red Hymnal 415

POSTLUDE

### SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Lynda Whitehead

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Lynda Whitehead

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

Widger, Ryan Vitsorek, Brook Ellis

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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(302) 378-2420  
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## ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S

<b>Sunday 03/17</b> Worship Services 8:30AM ASL & Livestreaming and 11AM, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM
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<b>Monday 03/18</b>
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<b>Tuesday 03/19</b> ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Leadership Mtg 6:30PM
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<b>Wednesday 03/20</b> Soup and Study-Noon at St. Paul's UMC, Confirmation Class 5PM, TOPS Mtg 5:45 PM, Handbell Choir 6 PM. Chancel Choir 7 PM
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<b>Thursday 03/21</b> 10AM Prayer and Praise Group, PFLAG 6:30PM
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<b>Friday 03/22</b>
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<b>Saturday 03/23</b> AA Mtg 7PM
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**NEXT JOY EVENT:** On Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:00, the JOY group will be attending the God's Power and Light presentation of "Camelot!!" For those that are interested, we will have an early dinner afterwards at Los Machados (600 N. Broad Street, Middletown). All are welcome, and tickets can be purchased from Charlotte Miller. If you can join us for dinner, contact Karen Ellis @iluvbrmuda @ gmail.com or Nadine Johnson @nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com. by Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY:** starts on April 1 at 9:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. This is not an April Fool's joke. Come and study with your brothers. You will be fed. We will meet for five Mondays. Hap

**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 two will be at Tree of Life, the last three will be at St. Paul's, beginning March 13th through March 27th. 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.

**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:** March 17 – Daphne Martin; March 18 – Charlii Miller; March 19 – Brook Ellis, Carlos Munar; March 20 – Amy Chas; March 21 – Lauren Haberstroh, Julie Packard; March 22 – Amanda Chas, Elaine Guy.

**ANNIVERSARIES:** March 23 – Ray & Alice Mullins, Christopher & Michael Lynn Whitehead

**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, Marilyn Hendershot, Allison, Dennis Downes, Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Liz Ravilious – Carl Ravilious' step-mother, Ethan Porter, 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, Faye Taylor's nephew Matthew Smith, and Brenda Shaffer's nephew, Helen George, Scott, Mindie, and Bo Pleasanton, Ellen McMichael and Norman Parks, Al Schrum and family on the loss of his father, Sarah Bosworth, family and friends of Bob Demassi on his sudden passing.

## **YELLOW HAT COLLECTIONS FOR MARCH 2024**

*3/03/24 U Dance B+ Foundation Childhood Cancer (Olivia Calbazana)*

*3/10/24 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin*

*3/17/24 Harvest Outreach People Project Food Delivery Wilmington (Boxes of Food/Pastor Linda)*

*3/24/24 Compassionate Card Ministry of St. Paul's (Nancee Bleistine)*

*3/31/24 Neighborhood House*

**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

- Cub Scouts –Tuesdays 6-8 PM
- TOPS Meeting – Wednesdays 5:45 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.