



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

Fifth Sunday of Easter

April 28, 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

MUSICAL REFLECTION: *I Will Arise and Go to Jesus* Handbell Choir

GATHERING WORDS: Liturgist – Ann Raymond

One: As members of Christ's tree of life;

All: we are connected, in love, to God.

One: As members of Christ's tree of life;

All: we are connected, in love, to one another.

One: As members of Christ's tree of life;

All: we strengthen our connection through worship.

*OPENING HYMN: *Fairest Lord Jesus* Red Hymnal 189

*OPENING PRAYER: (all praying): **Loving God, send your Spirit among us now. Speak truth to our hearts. Speak love to our lives, that we may remain in your love and share your love joyously with others. Speak grace to our souls, that we may rest in your grace and forgive others as we have been forgiven. Speak mercy to our world, that all the world may know your love and find redemption in your grace. In hope and trust, we pray. Amen**

CHILDREN'S TIME: *He Is Lord*

He is Lord. He is Lord. He is risen from the dead and he is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Pastor Linda shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Acts 8:26-40* (CEB)

²⁶ An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, "At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) ²⁸ He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it."

³⁰ Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

³¹ The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. ³² This was the passage of scripture he was reading:

*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent
so he didn't open his mouth.*

³³ *In his humiliation justice was taken away from him.*

*Who can tell the story of his descendants
because his life was taken from the earth?*

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?” ³⁵Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. ³⁶As they went down the road, they came to some water.

The eunuch said, “Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?” ³⁸He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Lord’s Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Baptized In Water

Black Hymnal 2248

GOSPEL LESSON: *John 15:1-8* (CEB)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. ²He removes any of my branches that don’t produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can’t produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can’t produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can’t do anything. ⁶If you don’t remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

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

THE MESSAGE:

“Is There An App For Abiding?”

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Holy God, bless these gifts with love. Transform lives with our ministries, that your people everywhere might know your grace, abide in your love, and connect with Christ, the vine of life. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today’s **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **4/28/24 Camp Pecometh.**

CHORAL ANTHEM:

Shout for Joy

Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **Loving God, send your Spirit to guide us. Guide us to listen, when people cry out for understanding. Guide us to speak, when people yearn for your good news. Guide us to compassion, when people reach out for help. Guide us to love, when people curl up from loneliness. Send your Spirit to guide us, that we may open our hearts and minds to hear and heed your guidance. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server- Melissa Brooks

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 formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of life. And so with your people on earth 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 Son Jesus Christ. 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. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once were no people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

Lifting the bread) On the night in which Jesus gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Reader 1: (Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to the disciples and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of 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 wine. Make them 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 Holy 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 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:

Go Make Of All Disciples

Red Hymnal 571

POSTLUDE

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Ann Raymond

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Melissa Brooks

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

Flowers today are donated by John & Patti Harmer to the glory of God.

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 04/28	Worship Services 8:30AM Livestreaming and ASL and 11AM, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM
Monday 04/29	Men's Bible Study 9AM
Tuesday 04/30	ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM
Wednesday 05/01	Confirmation Class 5PM, TOPS Mtg 5:45 PM, Handbell Choir 6 PM. Chancel Choir 7 PM
Thursday 05/02	10AM Prayer and Praise Group
Friday 05/03	
Saturday 05/04	AA Mtg 7PM

FINANCIAL REPORT: As of the end of the first quarter we have Income of \$75,458.26 (27.3% of budget) and Expenses of \$72,498.90 (25.2% of the budget). Thank you for your faithful support. Finance Committee

GO BAGS: St. Paul's Mission Team would like to put together "GO Bags" for any parishioner to take with them so they will be ready to share a physical reminder to folks that God sees them and wants to be there for them. We need the congregation to bring in the materials. The Mission Team will sort and assemble the bags. Then the bags will be ready for anyone to take one, two, or three out with them to give to someone who is standing on a corner, someone who needs a little "pick-me-up." These "Go Bags" are to be distributed quickly and without much explanation. Each bag will contain a bottle of water, a pasta can or some sort of protein, a juice box, crackers, fruit cup breakfast bar and a dessert. Also, a wrapped spoon & napkin. We are asking the congregation to bring in cases of bottled water or juice boxes, pasta cans or some type of protein in a "flip-top" container, juice boxes, crackers, fruit cups, breakfast bars, or a self-contained dessert. Napkins and plastic spoons would also be appreciated. Please bring in the items that you can, by Sunday, April 28th - date extended. Contact Dawn Buckworth with any questions.

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

BIRTHDAYS: April 29 – Reed Ashley; April 30 – Paul Loder; May 2 – Morgan Rowley; May 4 – Chris Blanco, Cedrick Reeves

ANNIVERSARIES: May 1 – Mike & Cindra Holland; May 3 – Bill & Margie Apps

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. You can also email Bonnie in the Church Office at bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org.

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, Dennis Downes, Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Ethan Porter, George, Dylan Green, Chris Chappelle, Blain Shoun, Sally Sutton's neighbor – Dottie, Kevin Quiveors – Al Calbazana's brother-in-law, Thomas Maloney's mother, 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, Sarah Bosworth, Sheila Ritchie Fawcett, daughter-in-law of Bev Fawcett, as she deals with a medical issue, David Sheats, John St. Jean and Michael Whitehead who just had heart by-pass surgery, Alice Mullins' brother -Clarence Brooks and the Bob deMasi family on his recent passing, Diane Shoun's sister-in-law, Amanda Branlund, who is going through cancer treatment, Keith Brady who was in a recent bad auto accident and has a traumatic brain injury, Bonnie Lawrence – friend of Nancy Weldin, Mary and Alan Ingram on the sudden passing of Mary's nephew, Richard Kandle, tragically killed in an auto accident, father of Jeff Mills who suddenly passed, Terry Sweeney, Linda Botsford, Kathy Golden.

YELLOW HAT COLLECTIONS FOR APRIL 2024

4/07/24 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin

4/14/24 Our Daily Bread

4/21/24 Cystic Fibrosis (Charlotte Miller)

4/28/24 Camp Pecometh

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 black box on the wall 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 – 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.