



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

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 1, 2024, 9:00AM Service, ASL & Livestreaming
WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden & June Stemmler, Photographer & Curator, Gail Garner – ASL Interpreter

PRELUDE AND GREETING

GATHERING WORDS:

Liturgist – Melissa Brooks

One: Creator, you bless us with the heavenly lights—

Many: the moon that waxes and wanes.

One: The planets that whirl around the sun,

Many: the galaxies that wink from afar.

One: In the darkness you call out, "Let there be light,"

Many: and the universe is filled with heavenly light.

One: You are our creator too,

Many: the One who formed us and who forms us still.

One: May your word of truth ring out today,

Many: and call us to new life.

*OPENING HYMN:

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

Black Hymnal 2129

*OPENING PRAYER: (all praying): **Creating God, you are the source of nature's splendor—the beauty and fragrance of delicate flowers, and sweet sound of birdsong. We come to you this morning with delight and gladness, grateful for all of your wonders. You plant your truth within us and inspire lives of caring and love. As the fields produce their harvest, may your love grow within us, that we too may produce a harvest of love, hope, and joy. Amen.**

WORDS FOR YOUNG METHODISTS:

I Will Enter His Gates

Black Hymnal 2270

I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart. I will enter his courts with praise. I will say this is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice for he has made me glad. He has made me glad, he has made me glad; I will rejoice for he has made me glad. He has made me glad, he has made me glad. I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

Ellie Leuliette shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Song of Solomon 2:8-13* (CEB)

Listen! It's my lover: here he comes now, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills. ⁹My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag. Here he stands now, outside our wall, peering through the windows, peeking through the lattices. ¹⁰My lover spoke and said to me, "Rise up, my dearest, my fairest, and go. ¹¹Here, the winter is past; the rains have come and gone. ¹²Blossoms have appeared in the land; the season of singing has arrived, and the sound of the turtledove is heard in our land. ¹³The green fruit is on the fig tree, and the grapevines in bloom are fragrant. Rise up, my dearest, my fairest, and go.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Lord, I Want to be a Christian

Red Hymnal 402

GOSPEL LESSON: *Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23* (CEB)

The Pharisees and some legal experts from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus. ²They saw some of his disciples eating food with unclean hands. (They were eating without first ritually purifying their hands through

washing. ³ The Pharisees and all the Jews don't eat without first washing their hands carefully. This is a way of observing the rules handed down by the elders. ⁴ Upon returning from the marketplace, they don't eat without first immersing themselves. They observe many other rules that have been handed down, such as the washing of cups, jugs, pans, and sleeping mats.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and legal experts asked Jesus, "Why are your disciples not living according to the rules handed down by the elders but instead eat food with ritually unclean hands?"

⁶ He replied, "Isaiah really knew what he was talking about when he prophesied about you hypocrites. He wrote,

*This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far away from me.*

⁷ *Their worship of me is empty
since they teach instructions that are human words.*

⁸ You ignore God's commandment while holding on to rules created by humans and handed down to you."

¹⁴ Then Jesus called the crowd again and said, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵ Nothing outside of a person can enter and contaminate a person in God's sight; rather, the things that come out of a person contaminate the person." ²¹ "It's from the inside, from the human heart, that evil thoughts come: sexual sins, thefts, murders, ²² adultery, greed, evil actions, deceit, unrestrained immorality, envy, insults, arrogance, and foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from the inside and contaminate a person in God's sight."

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

THE MESSAGE:

"Unusual Wisdom"

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: God of every good gift, bless the gifts of our resources, our prayers, and our lives. Bless these gifts for the good of others and to the honor of your name. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **9/01/24 National Donate Gift For Life (Rev. Nancee Bleistine).**

MUSICAL SELECTION:

Blessed Assurance

Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **Ever faithful God, you create each of us to be a presence of healing and love in our world. You equip us to resist intentions and actions that hurt ourselves and others. Forgive us when we forget your desire for us. Forgive us when we put aside your vision. Remind us of the love and goodness that you have planted within us. Draw our hearts close to you and bless us as we live in your ways. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Communion Officiant – Pastor Linda Ray
Communion Server – Melissa Brooks

Communion Setting 2257-a

Reader 2: The Lord be with you.

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. 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! 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: 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! 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 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. 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, 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:

The Lily Of The Valley

Black Hymnal 2062

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Melissa Brooks

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Melissa Brooks

Ushers: John & Patti Harmer, June Stemmler, John Harmon, Denis Shaffer, Laura Widger,
Ryan Vitsorek, Brook Ellis

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

Minister of Music – Duane Dillard

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) 293-9956
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ANNOUNCEMENTS – THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL’S

Sunday 09/01 Worship Services 9AM Livestreaming and ASL, Ice Cream Social following Morning Worship, Pak-A-Sak Sunday
Monday 09/02 Trustees 6:30PM
Tuesday 09/03
Wednesday 09/04 4:30 PM ASL, TOPS Mtg 5:45 PM
Thursday 09/05 10AM Prayer and Praise Group, 6:30 PM Stewardship Team
Friday 09/06
Saturday 09/07 AA Mtg 7PM

ICE CREAM SOCIAL after the September 1, 2024 Worship Service in Fellowship Hall. Please join in!

PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR! POTLUCK FELLOWSHIP SEPTEMBER 15th will be after the 11:00AM service. This will be our Fall kickoff and want everyone to join in. We will have sign-up sheets for donations of food. You can contact Janet Miller or Kenzel Messick with any questions.

LATEST FINANCIAL NEWS: If you there is a need for reimbursement, the **Committee Chairperson will need to complete a Disbursement Voucher**, list the account number, attach any receipts, and submit within 14 days; this is the best practice for auditing purposes. Once completed, place the Disbursement Voucher with receipts directly into the Treasurer/Financial black box which is hanging on the wall, on the landing leading up the stairs, to the church office. Disbursement Voucher forms are located in the mail bin outside the church office. Billing and reimbursement checks are sent out Tuesdays of each week. Thanks so much, Alice Mullins, Treasurer

SUMMER SERVICES: This Sunday is the last Summer 9AM service. Next Sunday, September 8, 2024, we will be back to 8:30 and 11:00AM services.

BRING YOUR BACKPACK TO CHURCH—Sunday, September 8 at either service to receive a blessing for your school year and a bookbag tag to remind you of God’s love for you. Teachers, students, bus drivers, school administrators, home school teachers, tutors, all are invited to bring something with you to church that reminds you of your teaching ministry.

CYBER SECURITY: An FYI, Pastor Linda’s email has been hacked several times in recent weeks. Pastor Linda does not get a copy of these, so is unaware of the situation unless you bring it to her attention. Here are some basic guidelines to follow when evaluating an email from Pastor Linda:

1. The only email that Pastor Linda uses is LindaRay@vaumc.org . To check the source of the email, hover with your mouse, over Pastor Linda’s name and the email will appear.
2. Pastor Linda will respond to your emails as individuals but does not usually send emails to individuals.
3. Pastor Linda’s regular schedule for church-wide emails is to send one on Friday or Saturday. If there are items that need addressing, she may send group emails at other times.
4. The subject line for her email correspondence is always ‘Church Family Check-In’.
5. Pastor Linda will never ask individuals or groups for gift cards, money or do anything discreetly.
6. If in doubt, do not open the email or respond but instead, reach out to Pastor Linda.

Pastor Linda has reported this activity to the tech support folks in the Virginia Annual Conference and this office has made our local tech support persons aware of this activity. Pastor Linda has begun to send the

Church Family Check-In emails using BCC/blind copy to further protect your emails. Pastor Linda apologizes for this and appreciates your willingness to be helpful and responsive.

BIRTHDAYS: September 1 – Mary Pizzadili; September 3 – Chris Wallace; September 5 – Paige Collins; September 7 – John Guy, Linda Mueller

ANNIVERSARIES: September 5 – Allen & Mary Ingram

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, Blain Shoun, 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, Scott, Mindie, and Bo Pleasanton, Ellen McMichael and Norman Parks, Sarah Bosworth, David Sheats, Alice Mullins' brother -Clarence Brooks, 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, Terry Sweeney, Michael Whitehead who is doing better but still grateful for prayers, Barbara Apigian, Dan Moore, Angela Christian for her mother Mala, Matthew Sheats, Kathy Golden, Rev. Cheryl Jensen, Sue Austin, Frank Hartenstein - Beth O'Grady's father waiting on medical tests, family of Kriss Elliott on the passing of her sister, friend of Karen Ellis, Ellie Leuliette on the passing of her niece, Georgiana Fennemore, Michael Stanley, Mark Johnson for surgery.

YELLOW HAT COLLECTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2024

9/01/24 National Donate Gift For Life (Nancee Bleistine)

9/08/24 El Ayudante Child, Yesprin

9/15/24 UMCOR for US Disaster Rsp. Relief

9/22/24 Alzheimer Research (Linda Sydnor)

9/29/24 Deaf Awareness Sunday (Gail Garner)

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, will resume September 11, 2024.
- St. Paul's Choir Rehearsal – Wednesdays 7 PM, will resume September 11, 2024.
- 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 will resume September 15, 2024.

Children's Sunday School will resume September 15, 2024.

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 first contact the Church Office to make sure that date is available, 302-378-2420, or email Bonnie at bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org. Then contact Alicia Blackwell, from Wildflowers by Alicia to place your order and have them delivered to the church. Alicia can be reached at (302) 593-9884.

You can certainly use whichever florist you choose, but please know you will have to either bring them to the church yourself or be here for that delivery and use your code to bring them into the church. We very much appreciate the beauty of flowers on our altar! If you prefer to buy flowers and arrange them yourself and bring them into the Church, we would love that as well!! Thanks, Bonnie

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.