



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

Sixth Sunday After Epiphany
February 16, 2025, 11 AM Traditional Service
WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

Mark Holden & June Stemmler, Photographer & Curator

GREETING

GATHERING WORDS:

Liturgist – Steve Johnson

One: In every season of greatest longing;

Many: God is with us.

One: In every instance of confusion, when we cannot find our way;

Many: God comes to be our guide.

One: For every moment when our hearts hunger, when our souls thirst, when our minds and bodies cry out;

Many: God plants us by streams of grace.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

*OPENING HYMN:

Marching To Zion

Red Hymnal 733

*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **Holy One, when the road is dusty under our feet and we find ourselves engulfed, you share with us the water of life. You plant our spirits by the streams of your Being. You nourish our bodies and replenish our souls. You challenge our minds and guide our hearts. Lead us again, O God, into your presence with your prayers. Be with us, as your renewing love overflows from our lives and our souls into the world. Amen**

WORDS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS:

God of Great and God of Small vs.3

Green Hymnal 3033

God of silence, God of sound, God by whom the lost are found. God of day and darkest night, God whose love turns wrong to right. Alleluia, Alleluia. Praise be to your name.

Courtney Martin shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Jeremiah 17:5-10* (CEB)

The Lord proclaims:

Cursed are those who trust in mere humans,
who depend on human strength
and turn their hearts from the Lord.

⁶They will be like a desert shrub
that doesn't know when relief comes.

They will live in the parched places of the wilderness,
in a barren land where no one survives.

⁷Happy are those who trust in the Lord,
who rely on the Lord.

⁸They will be like trees planted by the streams,
whose roots reach down to the water.

They won't fear drought when it comes;
their leaves will remain green.

They won't be stressed in the time of drought
or fail to bear fruit.

⁹The most cunning heart—
it's beyond help.

Who can figure it out?

¹⁰I, the Lord, probe the heart
and discern hidden motives,
to give everyone what they deserve,
the consequences of their deeds.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Through It All

Red Hymnal 507

*GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 6:17-26* (CEB)

¹⁷Jesus came down from the mountain with them and stood on a large area of level ground. A great company of his disciples and a huge crowd of people from all around Judea and Jerusalem and the area around Tyre and Sidon joined him there. ¹⁸They came to hear him and to be healed from their diseases, and those bothered by unclean spirits were healed. ¹⁹The whole crowd wanted to touch him, because power was going out from him and he was healing everyone.

²⁰Jesus raised his eyes to his disciples and said:

“Happy are you who are poor,
because God's kingdom is yours.

²¹Happy are you who hunger now,
because you will be satisfied.

Happy are you who weep now,
because you will laugh.

²²Happy are you when people hate you, reject you, insult you, and condemn your name as evil because of the Human One. ²³Rejoice when that happens! Leap for joy because you have a great reward in heaven. Their ancestors did the same things to the prophets.

²⁴But how terrible for you who are rich,
because you have already received your comfort.

²⁵How terrible for you who have plenty now,
because you will be hungry.

How terrible for you who laugh now,
because you will mourn and weep.

²⁶How terrible for you when all speak well of you.
Their ancestors did the same things to the false prophets.

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

THE MESSAGE:

“Wisdom and Understanding”

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Merciful God, you bless us beyond measure or belief. May the gifts you have poured into our lives overflow, spilling over into the world. May these gifts nourish all who have need. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **2/16/2025 American Heart Association.**

MUSICAL REFLECTION:

Blessed, How Blessed by David Cherwien

Chancel Choir

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: Merciful Lord, we pause to confess that sometimes we listen to the advice of the ungodly. We know better, but for some reason, we listen anyway. Forgive us. The lure of a quick fix turned our heads away from you, Lord. Forgive us. We knew it was wrong as soon as we did it, but pride kept us from backing out of our decision. Forgive us. Teach us the joy of being righteous. Show us how to delight in being holy. Remind us that new life in Christ means new thoughts, new ways, new decisions. Forgive us for failing to trust you in all things. 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. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone are God. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in 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, and spoke to us through your prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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: You sent Jesus to us, the light of the world. Jesus promised that those who followed him would never walk in darkness, but would have the light of life. The light of his life shone on all people, revealing the truth of your love. Jesus fed the hungry, cured the sick, ate with sinners, and proclaimed your truth.

(Lifting the bread) Before Jesus was betrayed, he gathered with his friends for a meal. Taking the bread, Jesus gave thanks to you and broke it. He gave it to his friends, saying, “Take and eat. I am with you now and forever. Let this meal feed you. Remember me as you eat.”

Reader 1: (Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and shared it with his followers, saying, “This is the cup of the new covenant, given for the forgiveness of sins. It is a gift for you and for all people. It is my love offered for you. Drink of this and remember me.”

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice in union with Christ’s offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

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 living presence of Jesus Christ, light of the world, our hope for all creation. Make us one with Jesus, and one with each other, as we walk in the light, singing your praises. Through Jesus Christ, light of the world, and through the Holy Spirit, radiance divine, all praise is yours, eternal God, now and forever, world without end.

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:

I Sing A Song Of The Saints Of God

Red Hymnal 712

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Steve Johnson

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Steve Johnson

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

Director of Music – Dr. Kathleen Shannon & Organist/Accompanist: Jin Kyung Seo

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor

lindaray@vaumc.org

(540) 207-1787

Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.

bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org

(302) 378-2420

Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer

stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org

(302) 293-9956

Duane Dillard, Minister of Music

duanedillard@gmail.com

(443) 593-2470

Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist

jinksblue@gmail.com

Dr. Kathleen Shannon/Director of Music

kathleenmshannon@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 02/16 Worship Services 8:30AM ASL & Livestreaming and 11AM Traditional, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM, Black History Program @Trinity AME Church, 27 E. Lockwood St, Middletown, 3:30PM, "A Call to Unite"

Monday 02/17 Adult Bible Series 9AM, Witness Team Mtg. 1PM

Tuesday 02/18 ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Leadership Mtg 6:30PM

Wednesday 02/19 TOPS Mtg 5:45PM, Bell 6PM & Choir 7PM Rehearsals

Thursday 02/20 10AM Prayer and Praise Group

Friday 02/21 N/A

Saturday 02/22 AA Mtg 7PM

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY: Thank you to everyone who participated and donated! Patti & John Harmer picked up the boxes of donated soup and delivered them to the Our Daily Bread program in Middletown. The breakdown and total of cans were:

Eagles....98 cans, Chiefs....10 cans, Not my team...25 cans, Mission team...42 cans

Total: 175 cans plus 9 boxes of crackers

Thank you John & Patti!

UMM BREAKFAST: Saturday, February 15th, 8:30AM. Planning for two outings and fundraisers will begin at 8:30AM along with breakfast. Please come to enjoy this free breakfast and share your ideas!! Contact Mark Holden to let him know if you will be attending or would like to help. Mark @maholden.com, or 802-279-8100.

UPDATE ON JOY EVENT: "Noah" at Sight and Sound on Thursday, May 1st at 3:00. We will begin collecting money from those who have reserved tickets, starting **Sunday, February 9th**. The cost per ticket is \$84.55, and checks are payable to Karen Ellis. Details regarding lunch prior to the show, as well as signing up to carpool will be forthcoming at a future date. Any questions may be directed to Nadine Johnson or Karen Ellis. Karen Ellis at iluvbrmuda@gmail.com and Nadine Johnson at Nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com.

WOMEN'S RETREAT: Mark your calendars for the return of the Women's Retreat - **Beach Bible Belonging**. It will be held at St. Paul's on May 17, 2025 from 10AM to 3PM. There will be Devotions, Music, Crafts, and

Meditation. Come join us with time to enjoy each other and FUN. There will be a suggested donation of \$10 to cover expenses. Please RSVP by April 20th to Sue Holden susieq2951@aol.com.

FINANCE NEWS FROM MELISSA BROOKS/CHAIR: January 2025

Revenue: \$25,632 Expenses: \$23,733

FINANCE/TREASURER-ALICE MULLINS NEWS: Stewardship pledge totals to date, for the 2025 Budget:

73 Pledges, Total Pledge Amount: \$232,757

Thank you to all who have so generously pledged so far!

Also, St. Paul's is recognized by Rev. Tom Pasmore, Del. District Superintendent of the Pen-Del Annual Conference, for remitting 100% of their Conference & District Apportionments in the Year 2024!

BIRTHDAYS: February 17- Brian McNelis; February 18 – Billy Mullins, David Sheats; February 20 – Tyler Holloran; February 22 – Sue Holden

ANNIVERSARIES: February 17 – John & Patricia Harmer; 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. You can also email Bonnie Valeski in the Church Office with your request at bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org.

Please be sure to let Bonnie know you want to remove your request. Thank you

PRAYERS FOR: David & Dorothy Dudgeon, Carolyn Akin, Jonathan Brooks, John Guy, Levi Schrum and family, Marilyn Hendershot, Dennis Downes, Jeffrey & Cheryl Martin, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Ethan Porter, George, Dylan Green, Kevin Quiveors – Al Calbazana's brother-in-law, and Brenda Shaffer's nephew, Scott, Mindie, and Bo Pleasanton, Norman Parks, David Sheats, Amanda Branlund who is going through cancer treatment, Terry Sweeney, Michael Whitehead who is doing better but still grateful for prayers, Bev Moore and family, Angela Christian's mother, Kathy Golden, Sue Austin, Georgiana Fennemore, Phil Elliott, Phil's parents, Faye Taylor's nephew Matthew Smith, Bob, Ken, Wells, nephew of Steve Johnson - Matthew, Henry Spencer, June Stemmler, Blain Shoun, Justin Marusa – cousin to Cindra Holland, having surgery for lung cancer in January, Skip Bason, Kenzel Messick's brother Lem – on his recovery to go well, family of a teaching colleague of Pastor Patti's, Rev. Cindy & David Koski recovering from recent falls, Ellie Leuliette & Dick Leuliette, Karen Kolf – sister to Alice Mullins. Jay and Laura, Rebecca Roberts - sister-in-law to Gail Garner going through chemotherapy and other therapies for leukemia, Joe Stemmler, Karen Ellis' friend John who had surgery on 1/7 and still in a coma, and also Karen's friend Julie who had a stroke recently, Indira – mother of friend of John Harmon, struggling with lung cancer and treatment setbacks, Nora Reeves who was in a car accident, Angela Christian who was in a car accident, Marilyn Dernberger – cousin to Kenzel Messick who had a stroke and surgery and Kenzel's niece – Heather Dill who is having cancer surgery, Linda Sydnor on the recent death of her brother. Continued prayers for the new baby great grandson of John & Carole Harmon, who is in NICU at CHOPS.

Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for February 2025

2/02/25 MOT Rise Against Hunger

2/09/25 Souper Bowl Sunday – Maggie McCombs (Kathy Chas)

2/16/25 American Heart Association

2/23/25 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 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

- Boy Scouts –Mondays 7-8:30 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
- Reconciling Ministries – TBD

Adult Sunday Bible Study 9:45AM

Children's Sunday School 9:45AM.

Adult Bible Series Mondays 9AM

Flowers for Worship

If you are interested in honoring a loved one with flowers at the altar on a particular Sunday, please call Bonnie or email the church office at bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org so we make sure the information is added in the bulletin and reserved for you. You can have a florist create a bouquet or you can create your own, and then bring it to the church on Saturday or before the 8:30 am service on Sunday morning.

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.