



**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. 2118448**

## **Seventh Sunday of Easter**

### **Ascension Sunday**

**June 1, 2025, 9:00AM Service, ASL and Livestreaming**  
**WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE**

**WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES**

Duane Dillard/Music, Mark Holden/Photographer/Curator, June Stemmler/Ushers, Gail Garner/ASL Interpreter

**GATHERING WORDS:**

Liturgist – Melissa Brooks

One: The roots of the Tree of Life run deep into the sacred soil.

**Many: The limbs of the Tree of Life reach out to embrace the goodness of all creation.**

One: The trunk of the Tree of Life stands strong in the face of hatred and malice toward the least, the lonely, the left out.

**Many: The branches of the Tree of Life struggle toward the heavens, hoping to bring about God's reign of justice and love for all.**

One: The winds of the Spirit breathe through the Tree of Life, bringing renewal and hope.

**Many: May our worship this day be a worthy offering that supports the Tree of Life and brings the goodness of the Sacred in our world.**

**OPENING HYMN:**

*Lily of the Valley*

Black Hymnal 2062

**\*OPENING PRAYER: (all praying): O God of earth and sky, as Jesus came among us in Bethlehem to raise us up to heaven so today we recall his departing from us at Jerusalem to be in all places. Though he is hidden from our sight, enable us to abide in him by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, until his mercy and grace fill your whole creation. Amen**

**WORDS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS:**

*How Great Is Our God* Chorus 2x

Green Hymnal 3003

*How great is our God! Sing with me 'How Great Is Our God!', And all will see how great,  
how great, is our God!*

Susie Cate shares a blessing with our children!

**LIFE SHARING** (*follow directions offered by the pastor*)

**FIRST LESSON:** *Acts 1: 1-11* CEB

Theophilus, the first scroll I wrote concerned everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning, <sup>2</sup> right up to the day when he was taken up into heaven. Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen. <sup>3</sup> After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom. <sup>4</sup> While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: <sup>5</sup> John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."<sup>6</sup> As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?"

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

<sup>9</sup> After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. <sup>11</sup> They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

*Make Us One*

Black Hymnal 2224

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 24:44-53* CEB

Jesus said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He said to them, “This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Look, I’m sending to you what my Father promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with heavenly power.” <sup>50</sup> He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. <sup>52</sup> They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. <sup>53</sup> And they were continuously in the temple praising God.

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

THE MESSAGE:

‘Rising Up’

Pastor Linda Ray

### WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Glorious God, shine through these gifts and through our very lives, that others may experience the beauty of your love and the power of your presence. Amen

OFFERTORY: Today’s **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **6/01/25 Habitat For Humanity (Dawn Buckworth)**.

MUSICAL REFLECTION:

*The Gift of Love*

Frank Whittington

\*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS:

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION (all praying): **Too often, Lord God, we are hesitant in our proclamation; seeking safe and suitable opportunities to speak of our faith. Too often, Lord God, we are half-hearted in our service; reluctant to stand out from the crowd or to attract criticism. Too often, Lord God, we live as if dependent wholly on our own resources; relying on our perceived skills and modest insights. Too often, Lord God, we look to the clouds for our inspiration, in the vain hope of finding you there. Forgive the poverty of our efforts and the frailty of our faith and open wide our hearts and minds to the immanent presence of our Risen, Living and Ascended Lord Jesus Christ. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray  
Officiant Server – Melissa Brooks

Reader 2: Lift up your hearts and give thanks to God.

Reader 1: Blessed are you, O God, who with your Word and Holy Spirit created all things and called them good. In Jesus Christ your Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Through Jesus’ suffering and death you took upon yourself our sin and death and destroyed their power for ever. You raised from the dead this same Jesus, who now reigns with you in glory, and poured upon us your Holy Spirit, making us the people of your new covenant.

Reader 2: (Lifting the bread) On the night before meeting with death, 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.

Reader 2: Gracious God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon your gifts of bread and cup. By your Spirit unite us with the living Christ and with all who seek to follow in his life-giving way., that we may further your reign of peace and justice in every place. As we share this holy meal, we invite your life to fill us; we invite your Spirit to lead us more faithfully to be the body of Christ in the world until we feast at your table forever.

**Reader 2:** Let us join our hearts and voices in the prayer that God continues to teach us:

**Our Father, which 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.**

PRAYERS AFTER RECEIVING:

*(The congregation will come forward to partake of the bread and cup.)*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN:

*Lord, I Lift Your Name On High*

Black Hymnal 2226

**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 & Brett Vitsorek

Greeters: Laura Widger, Brook Ellis

Minister of Music: Duane Dillard

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

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor

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Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist

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Dr. Kathleen Shannon, Director of Music

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL’S:**

**Sunday 06/01** Worship Services 9AM ASL & Livestreaming, Old Drawyers Event 2PM St. Paul’s Choir Sings, Pak A Sak Sunday

**Monday 06/02** Adult Bible Study 9AM, Trustee Mtg 6:30PM

**Tuesday 06/03** ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Health Ministry Mtg. 2PM

**Wednesday 06/04** TOPS meeting 5:45PM

**Thursday 06/05** 10AM Prayer and Praise Group

**Friday 06/06**

**Saturday 06/07** AA Mtg 7PM

**SUMMER SERVICE SCHEDULE:** The regular Summer Services’ reduced schedule will return on June 1 with just the one 9AM service; this will continue through August 31. Our normal two service schedule will return on September 7, the first Sunday in September.

**STAYING ON PAR WITH GOD GOLF OUTINGS SCHEDULE:** All outings are at Odessa National GC, Tee Times are at 9AM, dates are May 6 and 27, June 17 and 24, July 8 and 22, August 5 and 26, September 2 and 16 and October 7 and 21. Lunch follows at Odessa National at 11:30AM. Everyone is welcome to come out! Contact Don Mueller at [dmueller90@gmail.com](mailto:dmueller90@gmail.com), or Steve Johnson at [SJohn82602@aol.com](mailto:SJohn82602@aol.com) for further information.

**GRADUATE SUNDAY:** Good morning, if you have a soon-to-be graduate from Jr High, HS, college, tech school, near or far in your family, and would like to feature them in our Graduation Sunday booklet, please let me know. We will celebrate all grads, present or not, on **June 8<sup>th</sup>**, at that Sunday's services. A photo and short bio will be printed in the booklet with the bulletin and sent out via email that week also. Just send those electronically to me and I will put it all together. **If there are any last minute additions, I can take them until Tuesday, June 3.** Thanks, Bonnie/Church Office, [bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org](mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org).

**FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP:** If you are interested in honoring a loved one with flowers at the altar on a particular Sunday, please use the **Flowers sign-up chart and form with instructions on the Narthex bulletin board.**

You can also still call Bonnie or email the church office at [bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org](mailto: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 , (or a plant) and then bring it to the church on Saturday or before the 8:30 am service on Sunday morning.

**Our designated florist is Elana's in Middletown, 302-285-0800, please call them early in the week to set up your flower delivery for Saturday to St. Paul's. There will be NO delivery charge.**

**FINANCE NEWS FROM MELISSA BROOKS/CHAIR:**

April MTD:	Income \$ 21,177	Expenses \$ 25,086
2025 YTD:	Income \$ 127,433	Expenses \$ 97,815

**BIRTHDAYS:** June 1 - Kayla Haberstroh; June 2 – Nancee Bleistine, Liz Fullerton, Charlie Tokash; June 3 – Eric Widger; June 4 – Susan Wills; June 5 – Patti Harmer, Sharyn Sheats; June 6 – Linda Botsford, Maryann Kearns; June 7 – Faye Taylor

**ANNIVERSARIES:** June 6 – Edward & Joan Louis, Henry & Christine Spencer

**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](mailto: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, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, Ethan Porter, George, Dylan Green, Kevin Quiveors – Al Calbazana's brother-in-law, 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, Angela Christian's mother, Kathy Golden, Sue Austin, Georgiana Fennemore, Phil Elliott, Phil's parents, Faye Taylor's nephew Matthew Smith, Bob, Ken, Wells, Henry Spencer, 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, Ellie Leuliette & Dick Leuliette, Rebecca Roberts - sister-in-law to Gail Garner going through chemotherapy and other therapies for leukemia, Joe Stemmler, Kenzel's niece – Heather Dill who is having cancer surgery, Jay & Laura Wedel and family as they battle Laura's cancer, Hap Bonham as he recovers from recent surgery, Kathleen Golden, Cindra Holland's mother, who is currently hospitalized and seriously ill. The great-grandson baby of Carole & John Harmon who needs continued prayers, for Jessica Schrum and family, as her father, John Carmichael, begins his cancer treatment journey and her mom, Sandra, his caretaker; the passing of Karen Kolf – sister to Alice Mullins, Tom who begins his lung cancer journey, Cathy Blanco's mother as she recovers from her recent surgery, Al Schrum, Chris Foote, Christine Spencer, Danny Skeans, Dave Koski, Seth Greenwood and wife.

## Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for May 2025

6/01/25 Habitat For Humanity (Dawn Buckworth)

6/08/25 Peace with Justice Sunday – Scholarships/Teaching Skills

6/15/25 Youth Mission Trip

6/22/25 Deaf Outreach, Inc. (Patti & Carl Ravilious)

6/29/25 Brian Coley Resilience Center (Warriors Helping Warriors)

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 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 – Regularly Scheduled Practice will resume in the Fall.
- St. Paul's Choir Rehearsal – Regularly Scheduled Practice will resume in the Fall.
- 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 6:30PM
- Reconciling Ministries – TBD

**Adult Bible Study** will resume in the Fall.

**Children's Sunday School** will resume in the Fall.

**Adult Bible Study** will resume in the Fall.

### **Flowers for Worship**

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### **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 Ellie Leuliette at 484-432-4673.

### **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.

**STAYING ON PAR WITH GOD GOLF OUTINGS SCHEDULE:** All outings are at Odessa National GC, Tee Times are at 9AM, dates are May 6 and 27, June 17 and 24, July 8 and 22, August 5 and 26, September 2 and 16 and October 7 and 21. Lunch follows at Odessa National at 11:30AM. Everyone is welcome to come out! Contact Don Mueller at [dlnueller90@gmail.com](mailto:dlnueller90@gmail.com), or Steve Johnson at [SJohn82602@aol.com](mailto:SJohn82602@aol.com) for further information.

### **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.ourdailybreadmot.com/volunteer>. Contact Sue Holden, Missions Co-Chair, at 802-324-6167, [susieq2951@aol.com](mailto:susieq2951@aol.com).



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.