



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. 2118448

Fifth Sunday of Easter **Heritage Sunday**

May 18, 2025, 8:30 AM Service, ASL and Livestreaming

WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

GATHERING MUSIC AND PHOTOS: Duane Dillard/Music, Mark Holden/Photographer/Curator, Gail Garner/ASL Interpreter

GATHERING WORDS:

Liturgist – Brian McNelis

One: We gather today as people brought together by grace and bound together in the family of God.

Many: May God draw us together in love.

One: We are part of the people called Methodists, a movement planted in the soil of prayer, worship, study, and service.

Many: May we, too, draw nourishment and strength from this soil.

One: We are part of a movement warmed by the Spirit and watered by Christ.

Many: May we sink our roots deep and extend our branches high as we drink in the food of grace.

One: We are part of the people called Methodists, yes, but more than that, we are God's people, connected to every Christ follower who was, who is, and who will be by a network of roots tangled together in love.

Many: May we never stop seeking to comprehend the breadth, length, height, and depth of the love of Christ that roots us, grounds us, and binds us together.

***PRAISE AND WORSHIP:**

For the Beauty of the Earth

Red Hymnal 92

***OPENING PRAYER:** (all praying): **Shepherding God, guide us in this time of worship. Wipe away our tears for we are weary of weeping at the injustices of the world. You love us like a mother and protect us like a father. You restore our lives and claim us as your beloved children in a world made new. Dwell among us, we pray that we may love one another, as you have loved us. Grant us such a warming of our hearts that we, being set afire by holy love, may spread its flame to the uttermost parts of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

WORDS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS:

Awesome God

Black Hymnal 2040

Our God is an awesome God; he reigns from heaven above with wisdom, pow'r and love.

Our God is an awesome God!

Brian McNelis shares a blessing with our children!

PASS THE PEACE: (safely share words and signs of blessing)

I Love You With The Love Of The Lord

Words and Music by Jim Golbert. CCLI Song #10130

I love you with the love of the Lord, yes, I love you with the love of the Lord. I can see in you the glory of my King, and I love you with the love of the Lord.

FIRST LESSON: Acts 11:1-18 CEB

The apostles and the brothers and sisters throughout Judea heard that even the Gentiles had welcomed God's word. 2 When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him. 3 They accused him, "You went into the home of the uncircumcised and ate with them!"

4 Step-by-step, Peter explained what had happened. 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying when I had a visionary experience. In my vision, I saw something like a large linen sheet being lowered from heaven by its four corners. It came all the way down to me. 6 As I stared at it, wondering what it was, I saw four-legged animals—including wild beasts—as well as reptiles and wild birds. 7 I heard a voice say, 'Get up, Peter! Kill and eat!' 8 I responded, 'Absolutely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 The voice from heaven spoke a second time, 'Never consider unclean what God has made pure.' 10 This happened three times, then everything was pulled back into heaven. 11 At that moment three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. 12 The Spirit told me to go with them even though they were Gentiles. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered that man's house. 13 He reported to us how he had seen an angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and summon Simon, who is known as Peter. 14 He will tell you how you and your entire household can be saved.' 15 When I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as the Spirit fell on us in the beginning. 16 I remembered the Lord's words: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 If God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, then who am I? Could I stand in God's way?"

18 Once the apostles and other believers heard this, they calmed down. They praised God and concluded, "So then God has enabled Gentiles to change their hearts and lives so that they might have new life."

*GOSPEL LESSON: *John 13:31-35* CEB

When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Human One has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify the Human One in himself and will glorify him immediately. ³³ Little children, I'm with you for a little while longer. You will look for me—but, just as I told the Jewish leaders, I also tell you now—"Where I'm going, you can't come."

³⁴ "I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. ³⁵ This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other."

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

HYMN OF PREPARATION: *O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go* Red Hymnal 480

THE MESSAGE: "Us and Them" Pastor Linda Ray

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*You may speak aloud your joys and concerns.*)

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY REMINDERS: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports the **5/18/25 Urban Promise (Annual Conference) - Latch Key Kids, Wilmington, DE.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **Wisdom's Heart: deep within, we know how we have failed to be your people. Our hardened hearts are closed to the love of Christ; our lust for more and more blocks the fullness of your grace from transforming our lives; our trust in the powers of the world reveals our foolish nature. Have mercy, God of every generation. Pour out the rich blessing of forgiveness on our parched souls. Feed us with Heaven's Bread, so we might be nourished by your gentleness. Shape us as your people, and restore us to faithful living, as we seek to follow our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION: Pastor Linda Ray
Officiant Server – Brian McNelis

Reader 2 (singing): 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.

Communion Setting 2257-a

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 you our thanks and praise, O God! You created the world by speaking life into being. You placed within us and within each plant and animal of your creation amazing abilities to form and nurture new life, so that your creation might be renewed, reborn, season by season. You covenanted with your people and gave them Law that showed the way of Life, a path of peace, justice, mercy, reverence, love. You provided wise men and women as judges for your people to show them the path to Life. You called forth prophets who dared to speak the truth of Life to worldly powers that did not always want to hear the truth. You sent Jesus, your Son to walk in the way of Life, that we might follow. He suffered and died because of his refusal to participate in the death-dealing violence of the world. He rose again in victory because the powers of death cannot overcome the Divine power of Life. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise you and join their unending hymn:

Communion Setting 2257-b

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 are holy, O God of Life and holy is Jesus Christ, your Son, the resurrected One. You sent your only begotten, in whom your fullness dwells, to be for us the way, the truth, and the life. Revealing your love, radiating your life, Jesus taught those who listened to him, healed those who believed in him, received all who sought him. Jesus enacted peace in the midst of violence, love in the face of hate. Jesus offered Divine Life to all people. We thank you, God, for the incredible gift of Jesus, the Word made flesh. Through his resurrection, you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made us a new people.

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

Reader 1: (Lifting the cup) When the supper was over, Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and shared it with his friends, saying, "Drink from this cup. This cup represents my love, a sign of the new covenant. It brings forgiveness from sin as it quenches your thirst. Drink from this cup and remember me."

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

Communion Setting 2257-c

ALL: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again!

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. All glory and honor is yours, Holy God, now and forever.

Communion Setting 2257-d

ALL: AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.

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.

COMMUNION SONG:

To Know You More

Black Hymnal 2161

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

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

CLOSING MUSIC:

This Little Light of Mine

Red Hymnal 585

SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY

Liturgist: Brian McNelis

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

Communion Officiant: Brian McNelis

Duane Dillard, Music Ministry

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor
Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.
Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music
Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist

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ANNOUNCEMENTS - THIS WEEK AT ST. PAUL'S:

Sunday 05/18 Worship Services 8:30AM ASL & Livestreaming and 11AM, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM, UMM Blue Rocks Game Outing 1:05PM

Monday 05/19 Adult Bible Study 9AM, Compassionate Card Ministry 11AM – 12:45PM, Nurture Team Mtg. 1PM.

Tuesday 05/20 ODB, Cub Scouts 6PM, Pen-Del Annual Conf in Ocean City, Md. 5/20-22

Wednesday 05/21 TOPS meeting 5:45PM, Handbells Rehearsal 6PM, Choir Rehearsal 7PM

Thursday 05/22 10AM Prayer and Praise Group

Friday 05/23

Saturday 05/24 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, or Steve Johnson at 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 8th**, 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. **Please send the information and photos to me electronically no later than May 25th!** Thanks, Bonnie/Church Office, 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 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: May 15 – Nora Reeves; May 16 – Cindy Koski; May 17 – Dicky Wheeler; May 18 – Lynda Lambert; May 19 – Eva Scott, Jin Kyong Seo, Andrew Widger; May 20 – Karen Beavers, David Sydnor; May 21 – Sharan Duren

ANNIVERSARIES: N/A

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, 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.

Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for May 2025

5/04/25 Junior Diabetes Research Foundation (Barbara Lynn Manlove)

5/11/25 Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Del (Carolyn Stanley)

5/18/25 Urban Promise (annual conference) - Latch Key Kids, Wilmington, DE

5/25/25 Friends of Zoar (Steve Johnson)

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 – 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 6:30PM
- Reconciling Ministries – TBD

Adult Bible Study is held Sundays at 9:45AM.

Children's Sunday School is held Sundays at 9:45AM.

Adult Bible Study for all will begin again on Mondays, at 9AM in May.

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 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.

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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 dlnmueller90@gmail.com, or Steve Johnson at 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 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.ourdailybreadmot.com/volunteer>. Contact Sue Holden, Missions Co-Chair, at 802-324-6167, susieq2951@aol.com.



Hot Meal Service

Our Daily Bread serves 7 meals a week.

Lunch: Tuesday & Thursday • 12:00pm–1:00pm
(Dine-In Only)

Dinner: Monday–Friday • 5:00pm–6:00pm
(Dine-In or Take Out)

days/times for meal service remain the same each week
menus are subject to change

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.