



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

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

September 7, 2025, 11:00AM Service Traditional Service
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: Wherever you go, from the top of the highest mountain or into the deep abysses of the earth, God knows you.

Many: Wherever we go, God knows our name.

One: Whatever you do, from the time you wake up until you lay your head down again, God knows you.

Many: Whatever we do, God knows our name.

One: How ever you live, from your inner thoughts to your public acts and everything in between, God knows you.

Many: How ever we live, God knows our name.

One: We gather to worship God, who loves us, knows us, and calls us by name.

Many: We gather to worship God, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God who knows our name!

*OPENING HYMN:

Must Jesus Bear The Cross Alone

Red Hymnal 424

***OPENING PRAYER:** (all praying): **All-knowing God, we gather together with praise and thanksgiving for who You are, and for all that You have done for us. You know us better than we know ourselves—all our thoughts and actions— and yet You love us. No matter where we go or what we do, Your love encircles us—ahead and behind— gently leading and guiding and blessing. We praise You for Your love and Your faithful presence in our lives. May Your Spirit move in our hearts and minds as we worship together— examine our attitudes and actions, lay bare the things we need to confess, challenge us with Your Word, and guide us on to paths that lead to life. For we are Your people, called by Your name. Amen.**

WORDS FOR YOUNG METHODISTS:

Peace for the Children

Green Hymnal 3125

Peace for the children, peace, peace. Peace for the children, we pray. Following the path of One of peace, we work for healing, we work for peace, peace for the children today.

Courtney Martin shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *Jeremiah 18:1-11* (CEB)

Jeremiah received the Lord's word: ² Go down to the potter's house, and I'll give you instructions about what to do there. ³ So I went down to the potter's house; he was working on the potter's wheel. ⁴ But the piece he was making was flawed while still in his hands, so the potter started on another, as seemed best to him. ⁵ Then the Lord's word came to me: ⁶ House of Israel, can't I deal with you like this potter, declares the Lord? Like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in mine, house of Israel! ⁷ At any time I may announce that I will dig up, pull down, and destroy a nation or kingdom; ⁸ but if that nation I warned turns from its evil, then I'll relent and not carry out the harm I intended for it. ⁹ At the same time, I may announce that I will build and plant a nation or kingdom; ¹⁰ but if that nation displeases and disobeys me, then I'll relent and not carry out the good I intended for it. ¹¹ Now say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem:

This is what the Lord says: I am a potter preparing a disaster for you; I'm working out a plan against you. So each one of you, turn from your evil ways; reform your ways and your actions.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

Spirit Of The Living God

Red Hymnal 393

GOSPEL LESSON: *Luke 14:25-33* (CEB)

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. Turning to them, he said, ²⁶“Whoever comes to me and doesn't hate father and mother, spouse and children, and brothers and sisters—yes, even one's own life—cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever doesn't carry their own cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸“If one of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't you first sit down and calculate the cost, to determine whether you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when you have laid the foundation but couldn't finish the tower, all who see it will begin to belittle you. ³⁰ They will say, ‘Here's the person who began construction and couldn't complete it!’ ³¹ Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down to consider whether his ten thousand soldiers could go up against the twenty thousand coming against him? ³² And if he didn't think he could win, he would send a representative to discuss terms of peace while his enemy was still a long way off. ³³ In the same way, none of you who are unwilling to give up all of your possessions can be my disciple.

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

THE MESSAGE:

“God Knows My Name”

Pastor Linda Ray

WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: Gracious God, you have blessed us beyond measure; you have entrusted us as partners to care for your world. Bless these gifts and our very lives. Transform everything we are in this life into offerings that bring your love to the world. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today's **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **9/07/25 Paws for Life (Bev Fawcett)**.

CHORAL ANTHEM:

Come Thou Font of Every Blessing

Chancel Choir

Arr. Robert Thygersen

*THE DOXOLOGY:

Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **Holy God, we confess that we do not always love our neighbor. We confess that we have despised others, even to the point of hatred. We confess that we have been hurt by others. We confess that forgiveness and reconciliation at times are just impossible for us. We know that nothing is impossible in You. We come to You, seeking healing and wholeness for us. Help us, whenever possible, to live in peace with others, to seek reconciliation and healing and forgiveness. For Your Son came and lived among us, was betrayed and denied, abused and put to death. He rose again and came with the message of peace to those who had denied him and abandoned him. May we walk in his ways. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Pastor Linda Ray

Communion Server - Melissa Brooks

Reader 1: The Lord be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

Reader 1: Lift up your hearts.

ALL: We lift them up to the Lord.

Reader 1: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

ALL: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Reader 1: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. By your Will and through your Word you created the universe, gave it purpose and life, and called it good. Into this creation you placed us, and called us to tend and to keep it; but we quickly

turned from your Will and, like the sheep we were called to shepherd, we went astray. But you have not left us lost in the wilderness; you sent your Law and the Prophets to proclaim your Will, and in the fullness of time you sent your Son, our Savior Jesu Chris, as a Suffering Servant, to deliver us back into the safety of your family. And so with your people on earth and the great company of heaven we praise you as we join their unending hymn:

ALL: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Reader 2: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. As the Suffering Servant, Jesus took upon himself the penalty which we merit, bore within himself our sins, our sicknesses, our infirmities, and through his suffering and death bridged the gap of sin which we have cast between ourselves and each other, between ourselves and you. In his death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus our savior, friend and Lord, has brought an end to sickness and death to sin and separation. By his presence we know the grace and peace of God and are empowered to share these mercies with the whole world.

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

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

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

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

Reader 2: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Holy Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Holy God, now and forever.

ALL: AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory Forever. AMEN.

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

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

WE GO IN THE SPIRIT

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN:

Take Up Thy Cross

Red Hymnal 415

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor	PastorLinda@stpaulsodessa.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 09/07 Pak-A-Sak Sunday, 8:30AM Contemporary Worship Service ASL & Livestreaming and 11AM Traditional Worship Service
Monday 09/08 Finance Meeting 6:30PM
Tuesday 09/09
Wednesday 09/10 Deep Roots Food Drop Off 4:15PM, TOPS Mtg 5:45PM, Choir & Bells Rehearsals, 6PM & 7PM
Thursday 09/11 10AM Prayer and Praise Group
Friday 09/12
Saturday 09/13 AA Mtg 7PM

Sunday Adult Bible Study will resume 9/14/2025, 9:45AM

Children's Sunday School will resume 9/14/2025, 9:45AM

Adult Bible Study will resume Monday, 9/15/2025, 9AM

GRIEF SHARE: Will begin again at soon at St. Paul's UMC, **Sundays** from 3-5 PM.

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, or Steve Johnson at SJohn82602@aol.com for further information.

FINANCE NEWS FROM MELISSA BROOKS/CHAIR:

July Income	\$ 38,870.95
July Expenses	\$ (31,972.06)

2025 YTD Income	\$ 190,208.00
2025 YTD Ex- penses	\$(177,234.00)

Yellow Hat Collections

(Sunday collections only, does not include Vanco contributions)

YMCA	\$ 208.48
Campus Cru- sades	\$ 232.89
Our Daily Bread	\$ 251.00
Friendship House	\$ 169.00
	\$ 861.37

BIRTHDAYS: September 7 – John Guy, Linda Mueller; September 9- Linden McNelis; September 10 -Laura Sebastiano; September 11 – William O’Hop

ANNIVERSARIES: September 9 – Lulu & Al Calbazana, Denis & Brenda Shaffer; September 12 – Laura & Andrew Widger

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 **complete the card with instructions on the Narthex bulletin board.** You can email Bonnie at anytime to see if slots are taken on the chart, bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org.

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 (9am in summer) 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.

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 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, Georgiana Fennemore, Faye Taylor’s nephew Matthew Smith, Henry Spencer, Blain Shoun, Skip Bason, Kathleen Golden, Cindra Holland’s mother, who is currently hospitalized and seriously ill, for Jessica Schrum and family, as her father, John Carmichael, begins his cancer treatment journey and her mom, Sandra, his caretaker, Chris Foote, Christine Spencer and her father, Danny Skeans, Dave Koski, Deena Greenwood, Leah Elliott & Phil Elliott in their health struggles, Alice Mullins’ sister Sue Austin who has been ill, Jeanne Buckworth, Courtney Martin, for Marley - the 10 year old niece of Linda Botsford who is recovering from a serious hospitalization, Lauren – granddaughter to a friend of Sue Haberstroh recovering from surgery after a bad car accident, the great-grandson baby of Carole & John Harmon who needs continued prayers after his recent surgery, Dave Sydnor, for Frances who is battling pneumonia and COPD.

Upcoming Yellow Hat Schedule for September 2025

9/07/25 Paws for Life (Bev Fawcett)

9/14/25 UMCOR for US Disaster Rsp. Relief

9/21/25 Alzheimer Research (Linda Sydnor)

9/28/25 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 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

- 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 6PM
- St. Paul's Choir Rehearsal –Wednesdays 7PM
- 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
- Friends of Zoar Meeting – 2nd Tuesday 6PM

Sunday Adult Bible Study will resume 9/14/2025, 9:45AM

Children's Sunday School will resume 9/14/2025, 9:45AM

Adult Bible Study will resume Monday, 9/15/2025, 9AM

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.

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, 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

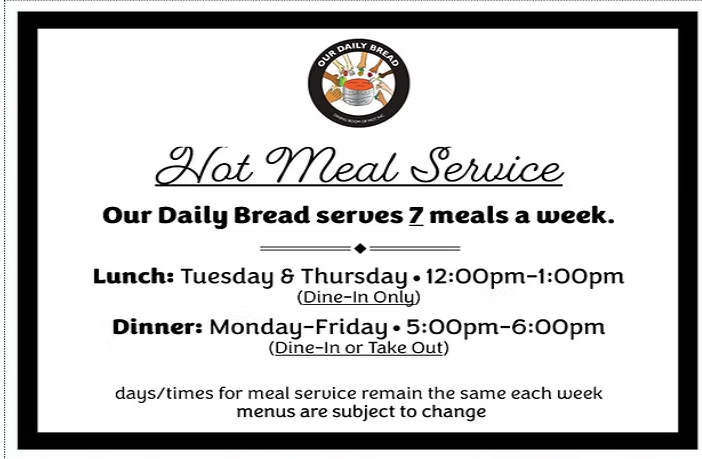
Nadine Johnson & Karen Ellis continue to work with the "Deep Roots" mission. This group works with families who are disconnected through homelessness and provides transitional shelter and other services to families in need. They need your help as they continue to contact members of the church to help with making meals the second Wednesday of every 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 iluvbr-muda@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.



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 our pantry is bare and needs these items:

- **pasta/pasta sauce**
- **canned items like Chef Boyardee, beef stew, Spam, chicken, tuna**
- **canned fruit**
- **peanut butter and jelly**
- **any boxed items like mac'n cheese, stuffing, mashed potatoes**

These non-perishables are needed to keep our pantry stocked:

Chef Boyardee, beef stew, Spam ,pancake mix/syrup, snacks - cookies, crackers etc. Toiletries are stocked for now.

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.