



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. 21184487

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

### UMCOR Sunday

March 15, 2026, 11:00 AM Service

WE ENTER GOD'S GATES WITH PRAISE

#### WELCOME WITH MUSIC AND IMAGES

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

GREETING *\*(please stand in body or spirit)*

GATHERING WORDS:

Liturgist – Susan Menei

One: Beloved, the journey of grace takes us to still waters, the valley of the shadow of death, even to tables surrounded by our enemies.

**Many: We gather to worship God, our Shepherd, who guides us on the journey.**

One: The journey of grace points us toward the Light so that we may bear the fruit of the Light in all that we do.

**Many: We gather to be formed by grace so that our lives may bear the fruit of all that is good and right and true.**

One: The journey of grace calls us to pay attention, to discern what is pleasing to God.

**Many: We gather to listen to the Spirit, who empowers us to go from this place to work together to do what is pleasing to God.**

One: Come, let us worship God who provides, inspires, and empowers us on the journey of grace.

**Many: Come, let us worship God as we journey in grace together!**

\*OPENING HYMN:

*Great Is Thy Faithfulness*

Red Hymnal 140

\*OPENING PRAYER (all praying): **Gracious and ever-present God, we give thanks that You are Immanuel, God-with-us, in times of joy and in seasons of trial. We remember today all who are recovering from Hurricane Helene in the mountains of North Carolina. Surround them with comfort, strength, and partners who bring relief and hope. We lift up immigrants and refugees who travel uncertain roads in search of safety. May they find welcome, justice, and peace. We remember all who face disaster, displacement, and despair across the world, and we thank you for the ministry of UMCOR that extends Your compassion through the hands of faithful servants. Strengthen us to say “yes” to Your call so that our lives embody hope, healing, and love. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen**

WORDS FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS:

*What A Mighty God We Serve*

Green Hymnal 3016

*What a mighty God we serve. What a mighty God we serve.*

*Angels bow before you, heaven and earth adore you. What a mighty God we serve.*

Brian McNelis shares a blessing with our children!

FIRST LESSON: *1 Samuel 16:1-13* (CEB)

The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to grieve over Saul? I have rejected him as king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and get going. I’m sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have found my next king among his sons.”<sup>2</sup> “How can I do that?” Samuel asked. “When Saul hears of it he’ll kill me!”

“Take a heifer with you,” the LORD replied, “and say, ‘I have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD.’<sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will make clear to you what you should do. You will anoint for me the person I point

out to you.”<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the LORD instructed. When he came to Bethlehem, the city elders came to meet him. They were shaking with fear. “Do you come in peace?” they asked.

<sup>5</sup> “Yes,” Samuel answered. “I’ve come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Now make yourselves holy, then come with me to the sacrifice.” Samuel made Jesse and his sons holy and invited them to the sacrifice as well. <sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, That must be the LORD’s anointed right in front. <sup>7</sup> But the LORD said to Samuel, “Have no regard for his appearance or stature, because I haven’t selected him. God doesn’t look at things like humans do. Humans see only what is visible to the eyes, but the LORD sees into the heart.” <sup>8</sup> Next Jesse called for Abinadab, who presented himself to Samuel, but he said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” <sup>9</sup> So Jesse presented Shammah, but Samuel said, “No, the LORD hasn’t chosen this one.” <sup>10</sup> Jesse presented seven of his sons to Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t picked any of these.” <sup>11</sup> Then Samuel asked Jesse, “Is that all of your boys?”

“There is still the youngest one,” Jesse answered, “but he’s out keeping the sheep.” “Send for him,” Samuel told Jesse, “because we can’t proceed until he gets here.” <sup>12</sup> So Jesse sent and brought him in. He was reddish brown, had beautiful eyes, and was good-looking. The LORD said, “That’s the one. Go anoint him.” <sup>13</sup> So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him right there in front of his brothers. The LORD’s spirit came over David from that point forward. Then Samuel left and went to Ramah.

HYMN OF PREPARATION:

*Spirit of the Living God*

Red Hymnal 393

\*GOSPEL LESSON: *John 9:1-41* (CEB)

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man who was blind from birth. <sup>2</sup> Jesus’ disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?” <sup>3</sup> Jesus answered, “Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God’s mighty works might be displayed in him. <sup>4</sup> While it’s daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. <sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup> After he said this, he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and smeared the mud on the man’s eyes. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (this word means sent). So the man went away and washed. When he returned, he could see.

<sup>8</sup> The man’s neighbors and those who used to see him when he was a beggar said, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” <sup>9</sup> Some said, “It is,” and others said, “No, it’s someone who looks like him.” But the man said, “Yes, it’s me!” <sup>10</sup> So they asked him, “How are you now able to see?” <sup>11</sup> He answered, “The man they call Jesus made mud, smeared it on my eyes, and said, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed, and then I could see.” <sup>12</sup> They asked, “Where is this man?” He replied, “I don’t know.”

<sup>13</sup> Then they led the man who had been born blind to the Pharisees. <sup>14</sup> Now Jesus made the mud and smeared it on the man’s eyes on a Sabbath day. <sup>15</sup> So Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. The man told them, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and now I see.” <sup>16</sup> Some Pharisees said, “This man isn’t from God, because he breaks the Sabbath law.” Others said, “How can a sinner do miraculous signs like these?” So they were divided. <sup>17</sup> Some of the Pharisees questioned the man who had been born blind again: “What do you have to say about him, since he healed your eyes?”

He replied, “He’s a prophet.”

<sup>18</sup> The Jewish leaders didn’t believe the man had been blind and received his sight until they called for his parents. <sup>19</sup> The Jewish leaders asked them, “Is this your son? Are you saying he was born blind? How can he now see?” <sup>20</sup> His parents answered, “We know he is our son. We know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup> But we don’t know how he now sees, and we don’t know who healed his eyes. Ask him. He’s old enough to speak for himself.” <sup>22</sup> His parents said this because they feared the Jewish authorities. This is because the Jewish authorities had already decided that whoever confessed Jesus to be the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. <sup>23</sup> That’s why his parents said, “He’s old enough. Ask him.” <sup>24</sup> Therefore, they called a second time for the man who had been born blind and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know this man is a sinner.”

<sup>25</sup> The man answered, “I don’t know whether he’s a sinner. Here’s what I do know: I was blind and now I see.”

26 They questioned him: “What did he do to you? How did he heal your eyes?” 27 He replied, “I already told you, and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

28 They insulted him: “You are his disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don’t know where this man is from.” 30 The man answered, “This is incredible! You don’t know where he is from, yet he healed my eyes! 31 We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners. God listens to anyone who is devout and does God’s will. 32 No one has ever heard of a healing of the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man wasn’t from God, he couldn’t do this.”

34 They responded, “You were born completely in sin! How is it that you dare to teach us?” Then they expelled him. Jesus finds the man born blind. 35 Jesus heard they had expelled the man born blind. Finding him, Jesus said, “Do you believe in the Human One?” 36 He answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

37 Jesus said, “You have seen him. In fact, he is the one speaking with you.” 38 The man said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped Jesus. 39 Jesus said, “I have come into the world to exercise judgment so that those who don’t see can see and those who see will become blind.”

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard what he said and asked, “Surely we aren’t blind, are we?” 41 Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you wouldn’t have any sin, but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

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

THE MESSAGE: “In View Of God’s Mercy: Mercy In Relationships” Pastor Linda Ray

### WE GIVE THANKS

OFFERTORY PRAYER: God of abundance and mercy, we thank You for every gift you have given us: life, breath, community, love. Bless the offerings we bring today, that they may embody Your love and extend Your presence. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

THE OFFERTORY: Today’s **Yellow Hat** mission offering supports **3/15/26 Harvest Outreach People Project Food Delivery Wilmington (Boxes of Food/Pastor Linda).**

CHORAL ANTHEM: *Father, Forgive Us* by Craig Courtney Chancel Choir

\*THE DOXOLOGY: Red Hymnal 95

GATHERING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (all praying): **O Lord, you are our shepherd, and yet we want. We lie down when we could act, we stir the pot when we could offer peace. We wander tempting paths instead of following you. We seek courage and comfort in earthly things rather than in you. We hate our enemies and refuse to break bread with them. We see scarcity even when you offer us abundance. We pray for forgiveness, for your goodness and mercy, so that we might dwell in You, in your grace, forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION: Pastor Linda Ray  
Communion Server- Barbara Lynn Manlove

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. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights,

you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people. When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice.

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:** Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. Now, when we your people prepare for the yearly feast of Easter, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that during these forty days of Lent we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

(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 cup. 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 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, almighty God, now and forever.

**ALL: AMEN. AMEN. AMEN.**

Reader 2: Now as children of God, may we join in prayer saying together:

**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 receive the bread and cup.)*

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

**WE GO IN THE SPIRIT!**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY AND SERVICE

SENDING HYMN:

*Open My Eyes That I May See*

Red Hymnal 454

**SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

Liturgist: Susan Menei

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

Communion Officiant/Server: Barbara Lynn Manlove

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  
**Altar flowers today donated by Kim Halladay to the glory of God and in honor of her grandchildren's spring birthdays.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Rev. Linda Driver Ray, Pastor	<a href="mailto:PastorLinda@stpaulsodessa.org">PastorLinda@stpaulsodessa.org</a>	(540) 207-1787
Bonnie Valeski, Admin. Asst.	<a href="mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org">bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org</a>	(302) 378-2420
Alice Mullins, Financial/Treasurer	<a href="mailto:stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org">stpodessa@stpaulsodessa.org</a>	(302) 293-9956
Duane Dillard, Minister of Music	<a href="mailto:duanedillard@gmail.com">duanedillard@gmail.com</a>	(443) 593-2470
Jin Kyung Seo, Organist/Accompanist	<a href="mailto:jinksblue@gmail.com">jinksblue@gmail.com</a>	
Dr. Kathleen Shannon, Director of Music	<a href="mailto:kathleenmshannon@gmail.com">kathleenmshannon@gmail.com</a>	

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

<b>Sunday 3/15</b> Worship Services 8:30AM with Livestreaming and ASL and 11AM, Adult & Children's Bible Study 9:45AM, Choir Practice 9:45AM
<b>Monday 3/16</b> Bible Study 10AM, Zoar Presentation Harriet Tubman's Walk 6PM
<b>Tuesday 3/17</b> Bible Study 6:30 PM, Leadership Comm. Mtg. 6:30PM
<b>Wednesday 3/18</b> Women's Book Club Mtg. 10AM, TOPS 5 PM, Handbell Choir 6 PM, Chancel Choir 7PM
<b>Thursday 3/19</b> Prayer and Praise Team 10 AM, Compassionate Card Ministry 10am-Noon, Soup and Study at Tree of Life @Noon, MCC Choir Rehearsal 7 PM
<b>Friday 3/20</b>
<b>Saturday 3/21</b> AA Mtg 7PM

**STEWARDSHIP PLEDGES TO DATE: Per Alice Mullins/Treasurer 74 Pledges---Total \$233,132**

Packets and extra cards are still available in Fellowship Hall. Please **return your financial pledge card in a sealed envelope, addressed to Alice Mullins, Treasurer.** The Time and Talent and the Prayer and Worship cards can be put in the collection plate or given to Pastor Linda.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE MONTHLY & YTD BUDGET TOTALS/MELISSA BROOKS CHAIR:**

**February Income \$38,368**  
**February Expense \$(34,397)**  
**Net Income \$3,971**

**2026 YTD Income \$61,192**  
**2026 YTD Expense \$(59,956)**  
**YTD Net Income \$1,236**

**February Yellow Hat Collections**

**MOT Rise Against Hunger \$300**  
**Souper Bowl Sunday \$1,908**  
**American Heart Assoc \$323**  
**UMCOR Int'l Dis Response \$326**  
**Total YH \$2,857**

**LENTEN SOUP & STUDY: Every Thursday in Lent at Tree of Life Church, Odessa, at Noon.** Everyone is welcome.

**ST. PAUL'S BOOK CLUB:** We will be meeting on **Wednesday, March 18th at 10:00** in Fellowship Hall. Our book is *Heaven Is for Real* by Lynn Vincent and Todd Burpo. You may get this at the library, Amazon or anywhere else you get your books. Janet Miller will be facilitating the discussion. It is not necessary to read the book in order to attend. Please bring any suggestions for our May gathering. The group can decide what they would like to read at the March meeting. Everyone is welcome!! Thank you, Nadine Johnson

**MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup> FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK:** Everyone is invited to bring and share your favorite dish or dessert after the 11AM service. We will continue with two services of 8:30 and 11AM on the fifth Sundays.

**HOPE BIKE TOUR COOKIE DRIVE:** On **May 9th** Law Enforcement United Road to Hope Bike Tour will be rolling into Rehoboth after the first leg of their journey from Atlantic City to Washington DC. These are police officers and retired police officers from the Northeast. There will be Delaware riders in the mix. They will be spending the night at the Fairfield Inn. I have arranged an evening cookout for about 175 folks. I would ask that St. Paul's bake cookies as we did last year for the riders. It was a HUGE hit and folks are still talking about it. **Please let me know what you are baking and how many and I'll keep a list going.** Store bought are fine if you don't feel like baking. Some of you just made cash donations; that works too ! Please have your cookies at St. Paul's **NO LATER THAN May 7th at 5 PM** so I can gather them up.

**My thanks, Rick Pulling**

**JOY GROUP SAVE THE DATE!** We have booked yet another JOY event at Sight & Sound in Lancaster!! We will be going to see "JOSHUA" on **Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.** At this point, 50 seats have been reserved. There is no payment due until after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year, but if you are contemplating attending the show, and if you might consider purchasing ticket(s) as a Christmas gift, please let us know so we can put your name on the list. Contact Karen Ellis at [iluvbrmuda@gmail.com](mailto:iluvbrmuda@gmail.com) or Nadine Johnson at [nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:nadine.faye.johnson@gmail.com) with questions or to sign up for what promises to be another amazing show!!

**BIRTHDAYS:** March 15 – Rosalie Lukens, Jennifer Mastin; March 17 – Daphne Martin; March 18 -Charlii Miller; March 19 – Brook Ellis, Carlos Munar; March 20 – Amy Chas; March 21 – Lauren Haberstroh, Julie Packard

**ANNIVERSARYS:** N/A

**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](mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org).

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 (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](mailto:bonnie@stpaulsodessa.org).

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

**PRAYERS FOR:** Carolyn Akin, Jonathan Brooks, John Guy, Levi Schrum and family, Nancy- sister of Alice Rizzo, 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, Blain Shoun, Skip Bason, for Jessica Schrum and family, as her father,

John Carmichael, begins his cancer treatment journey and her mom, Sandra, his caretaker, Chris Foote, 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, Lauren – granddaughter to a friend of Sue Haberstroh recovering from surgery after a bad car accident, Giancarlo and family - the great-grandson baby of Carole & John Harmon who needs prayers with his continuing critical health struggles, Dave Sydnor, Elayne Guy, Jordan Ingram, son of Allen & Mary Ingram, as he suffers through breakthrough seizures and medication adjustments, for Dave Corby , the family of Linda Sydnor as they deal with health issues, Shirley Walker on the recent passing of her son, Patricia Bower on the death of her brother and her health issues, Sharan Duren on her health issues, Alyssa Chapas, recently diagnosed with breast cancer, who is the daughter to long-time friend of Don Mueller, Alice Mullins' brother recently diagnosed with Parkinson's, Allen Ingram as he continues to heal, Marcia Wheeler, Lauren, Joe Stemmler and others struggling with health issues and recovery, Ms. Sarah Mullen as she recovers at home, Alice Mullins' niece, Kimberly Kolf., Patti Harmer as she recovers from knee replacement surgery, Helen George on her health journey.

### **Yellow Hat Schedule for March 2026**

**3/01/26 Society of St. Andrews (Pastor Linda)**

**3/08/26 Red Bird Mission**

**3/15/26 Harvest Outreach People Project Food Delivery Wilmington (Boxes of Food/Pastor Linda)**

**3/22/26 Compassionate Card Ministry of St Paul's**

**3/29/26 Neighborhood House**

**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 PM. Beginning in December 2025
- St. Paul's Prayer and Praise Group Ministry – Thursdays 10AM @Carole Harmon's Home
- St. Paul's Handbell Rehearsal – Wednesdays 6PM
- St. Paul's Choir Rehearsal –Sundays 9:45AM
- 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 – Quarterly Mtgs, 4th Thursday 6:30 PM – April, July, September
- Leadership Meeting – 3rd Tuesday 6:30PM
- Friends of Zoar Meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday 6PM
- Pak-A-Sak Sunday – First Sunday of the Month
- St. Paul's @ODB – Second Tuesday of the Month
- St. Paul's Deep Roots Food Collection – Second Wednesday of the Month

**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** - Monday's 10AM

**Men's Adult Bible Study** - April & October, Date & Time TBA

### **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.**

**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.

### **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 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](mailto:iluvbr-muda@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).



*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 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.