



The Link

December
2016

St. Paul United Church of Christ

101 South Perry Street • PO Box 147 • Wapakoneta, OH 45895

Phone: (419) 738-2215 Fax: (419) 738-2076

Email: cindy@stpaulucc.com Website: www.stpaulucc.com

www.facebook.com/StPaulWapakoneta



SUNDAY'S NEWS

Have you ever heard the phrase “what’s in a word?” Some years ago, I participated in a family festival sponsored by the Crisis Center of Auglaize County and its partners. My part in the festival was a brief puppet show and children’s activity about the effect words can have on us. At one point, one of the puppets announced to the audience the oft-quoted adage, “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.” But she knew it wasn’t true.

The truth is that our words have far more power than we are sometimes willing to recognize. Throughout my life I have had many scrapes and bruises. I have come to understand that words have the power to hurt far worse than knocked funny bones or skinned knees. What’s more, I have also come to realize that the pain of words spoken out of hatred or carelessness stays with us much longer than any kind of physical pain.

We live in a time when people are railing against “politically correct” language. Many people are reasserting that we have a constitutional right to free speech, and think perhaps that if their words hurt, it is up to others grow thicker skin. We have forgotten that just because we *can* say things that ignore the feelings of others doesn’t mean we *ought* to.

Far too often we let our words fly before giving much thought to how they might affect others. We use harsh words in moments of anger, forgetting that we can’t simply “take them back” later. Once it’s out there, it’s out there for good. Sometimes we use our words to get a laugh from others, not paying attention to the fact that we might gain our own popularity at someone else’s expense. Our words have the power to cut down dreams, to tear apart families, to crush hope.

But words potentially have another kind of power. Words can have the power to build up, to heal, and to empower. The opening chapter of our Bible demonstrates the positive potential of words. Our entire universe exists because God spoke words of creative energy and life. As we go through these seasons of Advent and Christmas, we should remember that in Jesus the Christ, the Word of God has come to dwell among us. It is a Word of hope and love, truth and light. It is a Word that speaks grace and mercy—a Word that brings healing to shattered hearts in a broken world. May we remember that if Christ truly dwells within us, our own words can have that same power.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Becky

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.” —John 1:1, 14

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE INVITATION

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH

You are all invited to a Christmas open house at the home of Revs. Adrian and Becky Sunday (211 N. Main St., Buckland, OH) on **Saturday, December 10th**. Drop in anytime between **1:00PM** and **7:00PM**. Everything is provided—just bring your good cheer and your appetites!

PASTOR JANICE'S PEN

As I preached in a recent sermon, Advent is a time of waiting. Waiting is not something most of us really like, even though we have to do it all the time. As we relate this to the whole Christmas theme, it takes 9 whole months for a baby to arrive. It is usually a time that is met with a lot of anticipation, nervousness and excitement. What will the baby's gender be? Who will it look like? Will the mom and baby get through the whole process in good health? For first-time parents there is the whole question of whether or not they will be able to live into the role of mother and father.

But there are other times we have to wait too: to find out if a job interview will actually lead to a new job; the results of a medical test that takes days to read; just how you did on a test you really studied hard for; that count down to retirement day; the days until a son or daughter return home from school or a tour overseas with the military. We spend much of our lives waiting.

One of my favorite authors of all time is Dr. Seuss. Yes, I am still a kid at heart. And in his book "Oh the Places You Will Go" there is a line about the waiting place and how it is:

...for people just waiting.
 Waiting for a train to go
 or a bus to come, or a plane to go
 or the mail to come, or the rain to go
 or the phone to ring, or the snow to snow
 or waiting around for a Yes or No
 or waiting for their hair to grow.
 Everyone is just waiting.....

NO! That's not for you!
 Somehow you'll escape
 all that waiting and staying.
 You'll find the bright places
 where Boom Bands are playing.

It is my prayer that each of you will find that Bright Place in your life, where you don't spend your life simply waiting, but instead will use that time that others just wait, to listen to the music of your life. I pray that you will use those sometimes difficult moments to grow and prosper.

Waiting may not be easy, but it can still be productive. We can use the time to reevaluate our lives, and find out what is truly important. We can identify our weak spots and seek to strengthen them and we can also identify our strengths and find ways to build them up. We can prepare ourselves for the end of this waiting period and learn from it how to better handle the next waiting place.

May Advent this year be a beautiful and wonderful time in the "Waiting Place."

Pastor Janice

Upcoming Book Study

The Sunflower:

On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness

This book tells the short story of a Nazi Concentration Camp prisoner who is brought to the bedside of a dying Nazi soldier who wants to be forgiven by "a Jew" before he dies. And in the rest of the book 32 prominent theologians, politicians and scholars weigh in on how Simon Wiesenthal ought to have responded.

The ability to forgive others is an issue that virtually all of us struggle with. Wading your way through this book together should lead to lively discussion and very likely will change the way that you view your own ability to forgive others. We will meet on Thursday nights at 6PM from January 12th to February 23th.

FEAST

It is hard to believe that we are almost done with another unit of FEAST. We have had a lot of fun with our classes, have learned some important Bible stories, and have gladly welcomed the addition of computers into our study time. Thank you to the many folks who continue to make FEAST a success. It truly takes a whole army of people to work with our energetic, and vibrant youth.

Our next session of FEAST will run from January 18 to April 5, 2017. The deadline for registrations is December 31, 2016. Forms will be handed out at FEAST, will be in the back of the sanctuary and in the church office. The classes that will be offered this time will be:

- Crafting with recycled items
- God and Harry Potter
- Chef Training
- Genealogy
- Hand Chimes
- Fun and Games
- Praying in Color
- Painting and Crafting

Recycled Donations

One of the classes that will be offered for the next session of FEAST will be making crafts out of recycled items, so we are in need of your help to begin collecting various items. Please drop them off in Rev. Janice's office, or outside her door.

- Toilet Paper tubes
- Dish soap bottles
- 2 liter soda bottles
- Plastic lids from various containers: Milk, soda, yogurt, coffee, peanut butter, etc.
- Soda cans
- Clear plastic containers that deli cookies, etc come in.

NEED ADDRESSES

We are requesting the mailing addresses for those who are listed on our prayer list in the military. If you know anyone of the list, or a new name to add, please call Kay Wellington at 419-739-8803 so we can get our list up to date.

PASTOR BECKY ON VACATION

Pastor Becky will be on vacation starting on **Monday, January 2nd till January 16th**. During this time please direct all your pastoral concerns to Pastor Janice at 740-417-6584 or call the church office.

CHILDREN'S HOMETOWN HOLIDAY

Wapakoneta will once again be hosting the Children's Hometown Holiday December 2-4, 2016. St Paul UCC will be serving free hot dogs and beverages for children on **Saturday, December 3rd from 11:00-1:00**. Other free items for the kids will include Dannon yogurt and cookies from CVS. Soup, sandwiches, hot pretzels, chips and pop will also be available for purchase. Bring your kids and tell your friends not to miss this great event!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, St. Paul UCC members, pastors, youth and friends for the wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner Bags prepared for all the families served by God's Storehouse, Inc.!!

Eighty (80) bags were prepared and delivered to the food pantry by our senior high youth. Large families received 2 bags and a turkey or large ham. Small families received 1 bag and their choice of a turkey breast, package of chicken breasts, small ham or pork chops. (These easier to prepare meats are often preferred by many of the families.)

What a generous gift your Thanksgiving Turkey and Dinner Bags were!!

The **Faith Formation Team** will be meeting on **Monday, December 5th at 6PM..** We will be discussing plans for the next session of FEAST which starts Wednesday, January 18, 2017. All are welcome!

Our Church Family

With caring thoughts...



Our deepest sympathy and condolences on the passing of **Deborah J. "Deb" Bailey**, who passed on Wednesday, November 16, 2016..

Our deepest sympathy and condolences on the passing of **Naomi Carnes** who passed on Saturday, November 26, 2016.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to our

St. Paul Youth!

December

Ezra Wellington	12/03/2005
Lauren Miller	12/05/2006
Abigail Burns-Watson	12/11/2003
Addison Smith	12/12/2007
Mitchel Hicks	12/14/2003
Harper Azbell	12/18/2014
Landon Brandt	12/23/2004
Caleb Schlenker	12/26/1999
Kurt Schlenker	12/26/1999
Olivia Allemeier	12/27/2006
Braden Fisher	12/29/2004

Happy Anniversary!!

12/03/1966	Philip & Diane Schlenker
12/03/1988	Steve & Tammy Nuesmeyer
12/12/1970	James & Jennifer Everhart
12/18/1965	James & Carol Berg
12/18/1971	John & Jean Nieter
12/19/1970	Karl & Becky Whetstone
12/22/2007	Nathan & Erica Preston
12/26/1965	Tom & Pat Shaw
12/28/2008	Dick & Mary Jo Roth
12/29/1990	Gary & Pam Halfhill
12/31/1995	John & Deb Zwez



Happy Birthday to...

12/01	Betty Brookhart	12/16	Melissa Schneider	12/26	Michael Burke
12/01	Bruce Baker	12/17	Patricia Brown	12/27	Grace Knatz
12/04	Wendy Brandehoff	12/19	Kathy Haehn	12/27	Elizabeth Thiedt
12/05	Mark Jarvis	12/20	Michelle Foulkes	12/27	Christina Byer
12/06	Jean Nieter	12/20	Kerri Smith	12/28	Shanon Lamb
12/06	Sarah Smithey	12/20	Courtney Wright	12/29	Willis Keller
12/06	Wendy Fetter	12/21	Evelyn Roediger	12/29	Pamela Lewis
12/06	Megan Brautigam	12/21	Kala Knoch	12/30	April Bowersock
12/07	Deb Wheeler	12/21	Bonnie Gondola	12/30	David Schlenker
12/07	Sherrie Fisher	12/22	Kelly Hawk	12/31	Scott Hengstler
12/10	Diane Method	12/22	Alfred Hollenbacher	12/31	Audrey Fisher
12/11	Hannah Kohler	12/23	Brian Thiedt		
12/11	Deb Zwez	12/24	Peggy Prater		
12/12	Nathan Schroer	12/24	Karen Ruck		
12/13	Kristina Hunter	12/24	Nancy Newland		
12/14	Samantha Braun	12/24	Cynthia Preston		
12/15	Nancy Freymuth	12/26	Chandler Kaeck		
12/15	Josh Steinke	12/26	Greg Schlenker		



Meetings and Events

LAST DAY OF FEAST

The last day for our FEAST Fall Semester will be **Wednesday, December 7th**. Our next semester will begin **Wednesday, January 18th**.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be falling on Sundays this year. In order to accommodate members' holiday celebrations, we will be having just **ONE** service on Christmas morning, **December 25th at 9:00AM** and **ONE** service on **New Year's Day at 9:00AM**. There will not be Sunday school either day. We will observe Christmas Eve worship at our usual times, with a family service at 5:00PM featuring Cherub Choir and Youth Hand Chimes and the candlelight service at 11:00PM featuring Bell Choir and Chancel Choir performing A Gospel Christmas Celebration "Joy" by Joel Raney. Plan to join us as we celebrate the newborn Savior!

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 26 for Christmas and also on Monday, January 2, 2017 for New Years. **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.**

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

We will again be offering a special service on **Tuesday, December 20th at 7:00PM** called **The Blue Christmas Service**. During the holidays many find it hard to cope because of the loss of a loved one, financial difficulties, or a change in life circumstances. Make the effort to seek out those around you who may need an extra reminder that they are a beloved child of God. Give them a reason to give thanks, because you are their friend. Please suggest this service to all who may need to attend it.

WOMEN'S GUILD

Women's Guild will begin meeting again on **Tuesday, December 13th at 1:30PM**. ALL women of the church and their friends are encouraged to attend. Please join in for fellowship, faith, and fun.

CIRCLE ONE

Our next scheduled meeting is **Thursday, December 8th** at Noon in the Ritter Room for our holiday carry in. We meet the 1st Thursday of every month September—May. Please plan to join

ST PAUL CAROLERS & FRIENDS

Please join us for caroling to those who are unable to join us regularly for worship in the sanctuary. We will be meeting at the church at 6:00PM on **Thursday, December 15th. We will leave at 6:07**. Please be prompt so we can organize groups and get traveling assignments. We will all meet back in Timmermeister to enjoy fellowship, hot chocolate and cookies. Please bring a friend and join us in this special way we celebrate Christmas.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Becky will be holding a Advent Bible Study starting on **Thursday, December 1st at 6:00PM and lasting till Thursday, December 22nd**. It will be called **Flames for the Faithful**; A study of the Advent Wreath.
All are Welcome!!!!

CONFIRMATION CLASS

The 2017 confirmation class will be meeting on Sunday, December 4th and December 18th from 3:00-6:00PM. Please let Pastor Becky know if you can't make it.

General Fund

Approved General Fund Monthly Budget	\$ 26,175.83
Given to General Fund through November 27	\$ 22,949.00
Difference	\$ 3,226.83
Given to Benevolences through November 27	\$ 2,031.25
Approved General Fund Budget Year to Date	\$287,934.17
Given to General Fund so far this year	\$204,213.62
Difference	\$ 83,720.55
Given to Benevolences so far this year	\$ 15,256.15



Benevolence Giving for December ~ OCWM

COLLECTION ITEMS FOR THE SEASON

The Sunday School is collecting items to donate to the Auglaize County Humane Society. From December 1st through mid January items may be brought in and placed under the Christmas tree in Timmermeister Hall. Because they are a non-profit, Humane Society runs strictly on adoptions and donations.



All the animals say Arf, Arf and Meow, Meow!!!!

ITEMS NEEDED FOR AUGLAIZE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

GREATLY NEEDED—Kitty Litter

- Dry Puppy/Kitten Food
- Dog Shampoo
- Bones
- Dog Collars (xs-xl)
- Puppy Pads
- Bleach
- Pinesol
- Laundry Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Dog/Cat Food
- Soft Dog Treats
- Large Dog Toys
- Dog Leashes
- Office Supplies
- Dawn Dish Soap
- Paper Towels
- Windex
- 39 Gallon Trash Bags



December 2016



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<i>1</i> 6:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> Children's Home Town Holiday
<i>4</i> 8:15AM Worship 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 3:00-6:00PM Confirmation Class	<i>5</i> 6:00PM Faith Formation Meeting	<i>6</i> 7—8:30PM Suicide Survivors Support Group	<i>7</i> 3:00PM FEAST 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Chancel Choir LAST DAY FOR FEAST	<i>8</i> 12:00 Noon Circle One Holiday Carry In 6:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>9</i> Life Line Screening	<i>10</i> 9AM—12PM CRI Sorting 1-7:00PM Open House at Pastor Sunday's House
<i>11</i> 8:15AM Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship	<i>12</i> 6:00PM Church Council	<i>13</i> 1:30PM Women's Guild	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i> 6:00PM Advent Bible Study 6:00PM Caroling to Shut Ins	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> Eagles Scout Ceremony
<i>18</i> 8:15AM Worship 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 3:00-6:00PM Confirmation Class	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i> 7:00PM Blue Christmas Service	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i> 6:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i> 5PM Family Worship AND 11PM Candlelight Service
<i>25</i> 9:00AM Worship	<i>26</i> Church office closed	<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>

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101 South Perry Street
PO Box 147
Wapakoneta, OH 45895



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Church Office

Phone (419) 738-2215
Fax (419) 738-2076
Website: www.stpaulucc.com
Email: cindy@stpaulucc.com

Rev. Becky Sunday, Senior Pastor

Study (419) 738-6216
Cell (567) 356-6773
Email becky@stpaulucc.com

Rev. Janice Burns-Watson, Associate Pastor

Study (419)739-7716
Cell(740)417-6584
Email janice@stpaulucc.com

Rev. Elaine Mikesell, Pastor Emerita

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

LET'S GET TOGETHER !

Regular Worship Times

Sunday Mornings 8:15 & 10:15 AM
Sunday School 9AM
Children's Church during 10:15 worship

Christmas Eve Services
5PM ~ Family Service
11PM ~ Candlelight Service

Christmas Day Service
9AM Only
New Years Day Service
9AM Only



ST. PAUL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Wapakoneta, Ohio

Our MISSION

As a congregation of God's people, we welcome and encourage all to join in fellowship, joyful and inspirational worship and faithful stewardship. United in Christ, we support and nurture one another in personal development and spiritual growth. We strive to reflect Christ's Love and to spread God's Word throughout our community and the world.