



The Link

December
2017

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

In less than a month it will be Christmas. The shopping season is well underway. There's nothing on the radio but holiday favorites. Bakers everywhere are firing up their ovens, and folks are trimming trees in droves. There is so much to do. The rush from Thanksgiving to Christmas is perhaps the most hectic time of the year. And in the midst of the hustle and bustle, we in the church are called into the season of Advent.

Advent is meant to be a time of reflection. For four weeks, we are supposed to wait in quiet anticipation for the Christ-child. It *should* be a prayerful time. It *should* be a time when we can focus on reflecting on our relationship to the Divine. It *should* be a time where we are more attune to God's voice in our lives. But we're so busy! We have responsibilities. We can't just walk away from our families and our jobs. People need us, especially now when things are so hectic. And, regrettably, once we have taken care of all of these responsibilities, there's often no time left to spare for ourselves—let alone giving our thoughts time to rest on spiritual things.

As I have wrestled with this conundrum, I've thought about the shepherds tending their flocks outside Bethlehem on that first Christmas so long ago. In the midst of chasing their sheep around the Judean countryside, they were interrupted by the angels' announcement. What was their reaction? The angel choir had barely finished singing when the shepherds said, "Let's go right now to Bethlehem and see what's happened" (Luke 2:15, CEB). Let's go *right now!* And away they went.

We have heard the story so many times that we forget how remarkable it is. A shepherd's only job is to watch the sheep. And they just left? What about their responsibility of tending the flock? What if something had happened while they were gone? What if predators or thieves had come?

The shepherds have an important lesson to teach us about our faith. Yes, we have responsibilities, but no matter what other calls lay claim upon our lives, none is greater than Christ's call on our hearts. No matter how busy we get, no matter how full our holiday schedule, our first priority is to be ready and willing to move in the direction God calls us.

This Advent, I challenge you to take a step back. Make a real effort to make your faith a priority. Come to worship. Join a Bible study. Make time to read an Advent devotion each morning. Buy an Advent calendar. Make some space to listen for the angels' song. Let's go...let's go *right now* to Bethlehem to see what God is doing. Will you come with me?

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Becky

SUNDAY OPEN HOUSE

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 16th**. Drop in anytime between **2:00PM** and **7:00PM**. Everything is provided—just bring your good cheer and your appetites!

PASTOR JANICE'S PEN

It is so easy to get hooked into the secular understanding of Christmas. Focusing on buying the perfect gifts, spending hours baking dozens of cookies, decorating the house to the Nth degree. None of these things are bad in and of themselves. After all, we love our family and friends and it is a good thing to do things that build up a relationships with them. Having said that I encourage us all to turn these events into traditions.

I recently had a discussion with my daughter who is 13. She has very fond memories of making sugar cookies every year and decorating them. They may not have always turned out as the most beautiful, but the memories will live on forever.

I also have very fond memories of decorating our house as a child on the day after Thanksgiving. We did this instead of going out shopping and I think we were all the better off for it.

After all, the true reason for the season is the little Christ child who was born to peasant parents in a barn of all places. What his birth shows us is it isn't the physical trappings that are important. What is important is relationships. After all we sing at Christmas about Emmanuel, God with us. The most important part of the story is that God loves us enough that Christ was sent to live amongst us. To be with us, in all the muck and mire of everyday life. Christ wasn't sent into the world to the lap of luxury, but a poor family who fled as refugees to Egypt. Joseph was a carpenter, who would have had calloused hands and a strong back.

So this Christmas, let us celebrate by building up the relationships in our lives. All our relationships with family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, church members and most of all with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pastor Janice

PARENTS' NIGHT OUT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

Parents, are you looking for a chance to have a night out during the busy holiday season? Pastors Becky and Janice are teaming up to host your kids (age 4 to 5th grade) for a fun evening of Christmas games, crafts, and movies. The fun will start **Sunday, December 17 at 6:00pm**. Kids are welcome to stay until 9:00pm while parents use the time for a rare dinner out, last-minute shopping, or just a few quiet hours to themselves. Pizza and snacks will be provided. Sign up in the church breezeway or in the church office.

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 and have learned some important Bible stories. 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 final FEAST for this session will be **Wednesday, December 6th**. We will end by having a Christmas party for the youth complete with candy making, crafts, games, and gifts for the kids. All while seeking to better understand the birth of the Christ child., and the real reason for the season.

CHILDREN'S HOMETOWN HOLIDAY

Wapakoneta will once again be hosting the Children's Hometown Holiday December 1-3, 2017. St Paul UCC will be serving free hot dogs and beverages for children on **Saturday, December 2nd 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!

2ND SUNDAY SERVICE-Dec.10th

Have you been looking for a different kind of worship experience? Pastor Becky and the Worship and Arts Committee of St. Paul will be experimenting in the coming months with a new worship service. You are all welcome to join us in Timmermeister Hall at 6:30pm on the second Sunday of each month, for an informal service incorporating dialogue, Bible study, and prayers. The goal of the service is to nurture a welcoming environment which will allow regular churchgoers and newcomers alike a comfortable place to bring their faith questions, joys, and concerns as the community of Christ within the context of a flexible and informal worship service. Mark your calendars, and plan to come as you are. ALL are welcome.

MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH

On **Wednesday, December 13th**, the middle school youth will meet at the church at 5:30PM for pizza. We will then journey to Auglaize Acres to sing Christmas carols and celebrate Christmas with the residents there. What a blessing this will be for both the youth and the residents. They can be picked up at the church at 8:00PM.

CALLING ALL ST. PAUL CAROLERS & FRIENDS

Please join us for caroling to our homebound on Thursday, December 14th. We will meet at the church at 6:00PM **and 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. Bring friends and family and join us in this special way we celebrate Christmas.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

Pastor Becky will be leading an Advent Bible Study on Thursday evenings in December. This will be a "Four Gospel" approach to the season exploring the coming of the Savior from the perspective of a different gospel each week. The study will begin at **7:00PM on Thursday, December 7 and will continue through December 28th**.

BELL CHOIR

The St. Paul UCC Bell Choir will once again be performing with the Lima Symphony Orchestra for their Bell, Brass, and Bows Concert on Saturday, December 9th at the Civic Center. Tickets are on sale and seats are filling up fast. Please call the Civic Center Box office at (419)-224-1552 to order your tickets.

CRISIS CENTER FAMILY CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

The mission committee has adopted a family of five from the Crisis Center for Christmas. The wish list for the family is posted on the bulletin board in the breezeway at the back of the sanctuary. Please take a look at the list and let us know what you can help provide to make this a truly Wonderful Christmas for them. If need to know more about the list please call the church office. Thank you in advance to all those that contribute. Items will need turned in by Wednesday, December 13th.

POINSETTIA ORDERS

Poinsettias may be ordered for display in our sanctuary at Christmas. All orders are due by Monday, December 4th. Please call the church office.

The **Faith Formation Team** will be meeting on **Monday, December 4th at 6PM**. We will be making any last minute plans for the last night of **FEAST** which is this Wednesday, December 6th. All are welcome!

Our Church Family

WELCOMING BABIES

Gabriella Lyn Stiles, born November 15th to Alexis and Dakota Stiles. Grandmother—Julie Hoelscher.

Joan Marlie Schlosser, born November 17th to Brian and Jenn Schlosser. Grandparents—Fred and Diane Schlosser

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 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
✓ 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 Birthday to...

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



Meetings and Events

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

In order to accommodate members' holiday celebrations, we will be having just **ONE** service on Christmas Eve morning, **December 24h at 9:00AM.** There will not be Sunday school. We will observe Christmas Eve worship at our usual times, with a family service at 5:00PM and the candlelight service at 11:00PM. Plan to join us as we celebrate the newborn Savior!

ANGELS AWARE!

Join the youth of St. Paul UCC at our 5:00PM service on Christmas Eve as they tell you the Christmas story from the angels' perspective. Find out how the angels learned about God's plan to send Jesus to earth as our St. Paul kids present their tale through story and song. You won't want to miss it!

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, December 25 for Christmas and also on Monday, January 1, 2018 for New Years. **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.**

HEIFER SUNDAY

Heifer Sunday is Sunday, December 3rd this year. Please stop over in Timmermeister Hall after the 10:15 service that day to enjoy decorated animal cookies with a glass of milk and donate to this great cause. Heifer International is not about feeding families, we help families feed themselves. Heifer is about self-reliance, sustainable change, human worth and human dignity. A family receiving a dairy goat and training in its care passes on one or more of its animals' offspring to another family in the village through a passing on the gift. Then, that family does likewise. Our gifts can not only transform a family, but also bring energy and spirit of sharing to entire communities. If you are writing a check, please make it out to St. Paul UCC and mark Heifer in the memo.

ST. PAUL MEN' SINGERS

St. Paul Men' Singers will be providing special music for **BOTH** 8:15AM and 10:15AM services on **Sunday, December 10th.**

CHANCEL CHOIR CANTATA

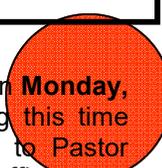
The chancel choir cantata will be on **Sunday, December 17th.** Come hear our wonderful choir.

CIRCLE ONE




Our next scheduled meeting is **Thursday, December 7th** at Noon in the Ritter Room for our holiday carry in lunch. We meet the 1st Thursday of every month September—May. Please plan to join us.

PASTOR BECKY ON VACATION



Pastor Becky will be on vacation starting on **Monday, January 1st till January 13th.** During this time please direct all your pastoral concerns to Pastor Janice at 740-417-6584 or call the church office.

GOD'S CREATION CALENDARS

We have 8 calendars left to sell. May's picture is of 2 loons at Hatch Lake in Itasca County, Minnesota. The scripture reads "Hide me in the shadow of your wings." Psalm 17:8. You may purchase a calendar from the church office or see Cheryl Short. The calendars are \$7.00 each.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

The 2018 confirmation class will be meeting on Sunday, December 3rd and December 17th from 3:00-6:00PM. Please let Pastor Becky know if you can't make it.



General Fund

Approved General Fund Monthly Budget	\$ 26,402.50
Given to General Fund	\$ 23,798.00
Difference	\$ 2,604.50
Given to Benevolences	\$ 1,658.70
Approved General Fund Budget Year to Date	\$290,427.50
Given to General Fund so far this year	\$209,021.12
Difference	\$ 81,406.38
Given to Benevolences so far this year	\$ 16,578.05



Benevolence Giving for December ~ OCWM

COLLECTION ITEMS FOR THE SEASON

ITEMS NEEDED FOR AUGLAIZE COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

The large Christmas tree is all set up in Timmermeister Hall for your donations to our local Humane Society. They are a non-profit organization which run on adoptions and donations. Items that are needed the most are at the top of the list but all items are very much appreciated. We will be accepting donations through the month of December and mid-way into January. Please place items under the tree.



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

- Cat litter
- Laundry soap
- Dry puppy/kitten food
- Toilet paper
- Canned cat/dog food
- Dog collars (xs-xl)
- Bleach
- Pine-sol
- 39 Gallon trash bags
- Dog/cat food
- Large dog toys
- Bones
- Office supplies
- Window
- Paper towels
- Soft dog treats
- Cat treats
- Dog leashes
- Dog shampoo
- Puppy pads
- Dawn dishsoap



DECEMBER 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<i>1</i>	<i>2</i> 11-1:00PM Hometown Holiday Lunch
<i>3</i> 8:15AM Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship w/ Holy Communion 1:15-2:30PM Play Practice 3:00-6:00PM Confirma- tion Class Heifer Sunday	<i>4</i> 6:00PM Faith Formation Meeting	<i>5</i> 7—8:30PM Suicide Survivors Support Group	<i>6</i> 3:00PM FEAST 6:30PM Cherub Choir 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Chancel Choir LAST DAY FOR FEAST	<i>7</i> 12:00 Noon Circle One Holiday Carry In 7:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i> 9AM—12PM CRI Sorting Bells, Brass, & Bows Concert with Lima Sym- phony Orchestra
<i>10</i> 8:15AM Worship 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 1:15-2:30PM Play Practice 6:30 2nd Sunday Service	<i>11</i> 6:00PM Church Council	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i> 5:30PM Middle School Youth Caroling 6:30PM Cherub Choir 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Chancel Choir	<i>14</i> 6:00PM Caroling to Shut Ins 7:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i> Eagles Scout Ceremony 2:00-7:00PM Open House at the Sunday's in Buckland
<i>17</i> 8:15AM Worship w/ Holy Communion 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 1:15-2:30PM Play Practice 3:00-6:00PM Confir- mation Class 6:00PM Parents Night Out	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i> 5:00PM Play Practice 6:30PM Cherub Choir 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Chancel Choir	<i>21</i> 7:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i> 1:00-3:00PM Dress Rehearsal for Children's Program
<i>24</i> 9:00AM Unified Wor- ship 5PM Family Worship AND 11PM Candlelight Service	<i>25</i> CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i> 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Chancel Choir	<i>28</i> 7:00PM Advent Bible Study	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>31</i> 8:15AM Worship 9:00AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship						

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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

9AM ~ Unified Morning Service

5PM ~ Family Service
with Children Musical

11PM ~ Candlelight Service



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.