

# **“THE MESSENGER”**

**PUBLISHED BY ST. PAUL'S UCC, MIDDLETOWN OHIO 45044**

**Rev. Rich Luh, Pastor 937-993-5464; Church – 513-422-4519**

**January 2024**

## **WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR!!**

There's a tendency for all of us to look back and be filled with regrets about things we did or didn't do; things we said or didn't say and that puts a damper on the new year. Rather, I propose that we look with joy and excitement at the possibilities that lie ahead for all of us this year.

We have our families and friends. We have our jobs, for those who are still working; and we have our church family. Most of us have decent health and mobility to get around and do those things we are meant to do.

Most importantly, we have God's love embracing each and every one of us every day! With his loving arms encircling our hearts, giving us the encouragement and inner strength to face whatever challenges may await us, it is no wonder that we should be filled with wonderful anticipation for all that awaits us as the year goes on.

God's love, as perfectly expressed through his Son and our Lord Jesus Christ, is our link to living our lives to the fullest extent possible. It is our golden opportunity to use our gifts and talents, our love and compassion, our forgiveness and empathy and pass them on to those we meet along life's way as individuals and as a church body.

The choice is up to you and I as to how we approach this New Year. Let us be determined to accept this New Year as a precious gift from God and use it in such a way that it will bring glory and honor to him.

**Shalom,**

*Pastor Rich*

### **OUR SINCERE CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY**

To John Williams, on the death of his son J. Patrick Williams at the end of November. May God's love continue to embrace John and his whole family in their time of grief. Flowers were put on the altar in his memory on December 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **"Guide for the New Year"**

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:

Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown!

And he replied: Go out into the darkness and put thine hand into the  
Hand of God.

That shall be to thee better than light and safer than a known way.

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

1 – Calleigh Barraclough

29 – Mike Ratliff

8 – Linda Britton

**May you all have a joyous**

15 – Carl Batliner

**celebration!**

23 – Bryan Canter

27 – Rebecca LeMaster

**“NEW YEAR”** by Christina G. Rossetti (1830-94)

New Year met me somewhat sad:

Old Tear leaves me tired,

Stripped of favorite things I had,

Balked of much desired.

Yet farther on my road today,

God willing, farther on my way.

New Year coming on apace,

What have you to give me?

Bring you scathe, or bring you grace,

Face me with a honest face.

You shall not deceive me.

Be it good or ill, be it what you will,

It needs shall help me on my road,

My rugged way to heaven, please God.

“We are bound, by every rule of justice and equity, to give the New Year credit for being a good one until he proves himself unworthy of the confidence we repose in him.” Charles Dickens

## **Many Thanks!!!**

To all who helped to decorate the church for the Christmas Season. Now, we will need some help to undecorate – and this will be on **Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> after church**. Otherwise, we will finish up on Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 9am. If you can assist, please let Barb know.

### **Please join Us for Worship**

7 – “Defining Moments” – Communion

14 – “Known and Loved”

21 – “Follow Me”

28 – “Power to Do!”

### **LUNCH BUNCH RETURNS**

After taking a few months off, we are ready to congregate at one of our local restaurants after worship on the last Sunday of the month. So, we’ll start off doing this on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Our Sympathy**

Friends of SHALOM lost a faithful supporter in the death of Dr. E. John Raab in December. Please keep his wife, Mary and the entire family in your prayers during her time of loss.

### **THE CLOTHES CLOSET**

This valuable ministry operates every Tuesday from 10-1pm. It has helped hundreds of people since it opened 2 and ½ years ago. Currently they are looking for winter clothing. See Jim Rockwell if you have any questions about this mission outreach. It provides free clothing to men, women, and children; as well as some bedding and footwear, belts.

### Liturgists

7 – Marsha Minge

14 – Corrine Lowman

21 – Cindy Burnett

28 – Carl Batliner

### Ushers

Larry & Darlene Adams

Carl & Jennifer Batliner

Tom & Marcia Shibley

Dan Flory & Rick Lyons

### Greeters

Julie Ratliff

Larry Adams

Rick Lyons

Chuck Clark

### **Many Thanks!!!**

Thank you so much to those of you who helped in anyway during the Advent Season and Christmas Eve service – those who played instruments, sang, helped decorate, Lay readers, Advent Candle readers, Coffee Hour servers. Without your help, our worship experiences would be very limited indeed.

A special thanks to Jim Rockwell for helping set up for Coffee hour, doing the Clothes Closet and general clean-up; Rick Lyons for overseeing the maintenance of the building; Rick Glatfelter for organizing the Communion servers and chairing the Future's Committee; Barb for all her efforts of leadership and musicianship; Marsha for her singing talents and leading our Bell Choir; Sue Luh for doing anything and everything as Secretary; Chuck for manning the video feed for our worship services; all those who make goodies for our Coffee hours; Jennifer and Carl Batliner for all their work with finances and legal issues; Julie Ratliff and Jennifer Batliner for Mission; Abbey Breeding for being our Treasurer; Judy Brewer for being the Council Secretary; Chuck Clark for handling the church service recordings and our Lunch Brunch Group; Brayn Canter for handling our investments; to those who greet, usher, open and close, and serve Communion.

Our special thanks to Mike Ratliff and Sabrina Barraclough for providing special music solos at our Christmas Eve service! It was fantastic!

So, THANK YOU ALL WHO HELP MAKE THIS CHURCH COMMUNITY WHAT IT IS – A LOVING, CARING AND SHARING FAMILY!

We look forward to working with you all in 2024!

## **CHURCH COUNCIL SECRETARY NEEDED**

Unfortunately, Judy Brewer needed to step away as Secretary and so the search is on for someone to replace her at our Council Meetings. If interested, please let Barb know ASAP. The salary is twice as much as the other volunteers make – so hurry before someone else takes it!

Seriously, this position is a necessity to record the minutes of all our Council Meetings (regular and special) plus our Congregational Meetings held twice a year.

## **BELL CHOIR ALIVE AND WELL!**

Yes, it was so good to have our Bell Choir play for our Christmas Eve service. Those participating were: Marsha Minge, Barb Flory, Abbey Breeding, Hillary Fraley, Julie Ratliff, Sabrina and Calleigh Barraclough.

Kaitlynn and Austin Schultz will make their debut with the group during our Lenten season. Sabrina filled in for us but returns to college at the end of this month. Many thanks to Marsha and Barb for reorganizing this unit. If more of you would like to join with us, please let either Marsha or Barb know of your interest.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Pastor Rich – Monday through Wednesday – 9am – 2pm\*

Secretary Sue – Monday through Tuesday– 9am – 2pm Wednesday varies

\*If needed, Rich or Sue will be available other times and days throughout the week.

His phone: 937-993-5464; Office phone: 513-422-4519

Email: [office@stpaulsuccmidd.org](mailto:office@stpaulsuccmidd.org); or [pastor@stpaulsuccmidd.org](mailto:pastor@stpaulsuccmidd.org)

## **BIBLE STUDY**

Those interested can join us on Tuesday afternoons from 1-2pm in the Church Parlor. We are beginning the book of Acts.