

Cont. from pg 1.

reflects the power of the gift that lives at the center, Jesus Christ. This is truly a season of giving, and yes, we will all give and receive out of our abundance, so let us remember the community when we choose how to give. Let your gift to the community reflect the importance of the gift given to the community so that we can impact the world around us. Special gifts can go a long way, and legacy gifts are a very faithful way to show the power of the gift of God. May your gifting be grand. May the gift you give to the community enhance the community's work.

*Soli Deo Gloria, Pastor Muse*

## FROM PASTOR THOMPSON

### ADVENT PEACE?

Advent brings us a variety of themes. This year we start with Jesus warning us of the end times, we get two weeks of John the baptizer, preparing the people for Christ, and the last Sunday of Advent we hear the angel tell Mary she will bear God. The messages from Jesus and John don't feel like good news. They are quite scary if you believe that God is not in the midst of them. Yet, they are leading us to the final reality that God is coming into the world, in Jesus, and will return.

There is peace in the midst of this chaotic and often difficult world. Peace is not the absence of struggle but knowing that God is at work. When we hear the words that

sound like threats, we are reminded that God uses The Law to reveal our sin. But God also uses these words to point us to the places of hope and salvation.

May peace in the midst of chaos, surround you this Advent season.

Peace,

*Pastor Diana Thompson*

### WELLNESS EVENTS

**MEDITATION**  
**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19,**  
**AT 7:00 PM**

There is no experience needed. Wear comfortable clothes and enjoy a time of peace, quiet, and centering. Join Pastor Muse on-line or in-person.

**YOGA**  
**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9,**  
**AT 9:00 AM**

Join us for yoga.  
Angela is leading us in a time of refreshment, renewal, flexibility, and connection to our bodies and God.

No experience is necessary. Please bring an exercise mat, if you have one. Some mats are available.

## INK CARTRIDGE RECYCLING

We continue to collect used ink cartridges and toner cartridges. This is a great way to help offset the cost of office supplies. Our box is running low so please contribute. There is a donation box in Garnes Hall.

## HOSPITAL ADMITTANCE

The hospitals are no longer informing churches if a member has been admitted. If you or a loved one is in the hospital please inform the church office or the pastor, so that we can be part of the healing.

## CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORIES

Please make sure that the church office is aware of any change in your information.

## ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Advent Devotionals are available on the resource table in Garnes Hall. They are for members and guests to take and use during the season.

*The Eternal Flame is given to the glory of  
God in loving memory of my parents,  
Donald and Joan Boyce,  
my sister, Dawn Boyce and my  
grandmother, Juanita Shutler  
by Diana Cullen.*



# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Our theme for the 2023 School year

**“We will do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God!”** Micah 6:8

Our education sessions are approaching the **Advent/Christmas Season** and have been providing strong education on faith. **Come be part of the education process here at St. Paul’s.** We have classes for Pre-k through 2nd, 3rd through 5th, 6th through 8th, 9th through 12th and Adult. If you are interested in being part of our teaching team, please talk to Pastor Muse. There will be no sessions on December 24th or December 31st.

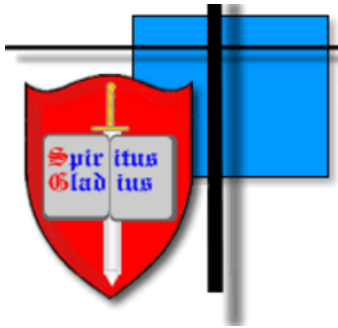
**Children’s Church** continues to grow. This is an opportunity for children up to 5th grade to have their own time that will take place during the Word section of worship. The Children who wish to participate will leave after the Children’s Sermon and return during the greeting of peace.

**Bible Study** continues in person on Wednesdays at 10:00 am and 7:00 pm. Pastor Muse is offering an on-line study of the Gospel of Mark. The sessions will be posted at 9:00 am each week. There will be no Bible Study on December 27th.

**Daily Devotionals** and scriptures reading are available on the table in Garnes Hall. If you would like to receive the Daily Devotional email sign up through the web-site or contact the pastor for assistance.

The **weekly youth group** is every Wednesday at 5:30 PM. **It is open to all youth from 1st grade through 12th grade.** We gather for a meal then learn and play games. Come join the fun.

Check out all the wonderful resources **our library** has to offer. There are many items that can enhance your journey of faith.



# *The Messenger*

## *December 2023*

**St. Paul's  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church**

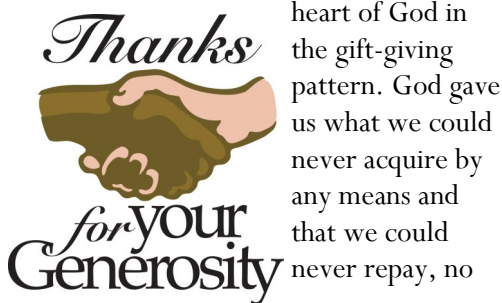
3295 S. Union Ave.  
Alliance, Ohio 44601  
330-823-2285

## FROM PASTOR MUSE

*Or who has given a gift,  
to receive a gift in return?  
Romans 11:35*

When we change the calendar to December, we officially enter into the "Season of Giving," as many advertisers would claim. The apparent reason is that people will go out and buy things to give, thus driving up profits. The entire month will be filled with print and media ads showing us what we can purchase and give as gifts. But the underlying theme is that others will buy and give you gifts. This completes the gift-giving cycle; everyone can reflect on a sound economic year. I am all for a good financial year because we all benefit from that. Still, the notion of gift-giving, especially this time of year, is far more profound and resides in our own narrative.

The season of Advent tells us the narrative leading up to the first and most precious gift, that of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, born into time. The incarnation of the gift-giving this time of year is to reflect and mirror the very



matter how much we give in return. This is the true nature of a gift, that it is outside the ability to repay. The coming of the Christ child is more than we can ever amass or accumulate, so we dwell with this incredibly gracious God. Now, God never wanted us to repay the gift to God since we could not. Still, God wanted us to show the power of the gift by expressing our own generosity, individually and as a part of something bigger.

Throughout the year, stemming from this generous event, we are to look at the blessings we receive, which are many, and then respond in our own way to glorify God through our generosity. This can be done in various ways, including but not limited to purchasing gifts, giving our time, sharing our unique talents, imparting wisdom, and bringing a calm presence in the chaos; the list could continue. God desires us to be generous with the gift of life we have been given individually.

We are also part of something bigger than ourselves, and that bigger can do more with a unified presence. God has called us together as a faith community, and we gather around the gift of God in Jesus Christ, born, crucified, and risen. Together, we can use the combined generosity for the good of the kingdom, and how we show generosity in the community

Cont. on pg 2.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From Pastor Thompson Wellness Events	2
Hospital Admittance Ink Cartridge Recycling Eternal Flame Christian Education	3
Outreach December Birthdays Holiday Donations Christmas Day Prayer New Member	4
Lectionary Readings for December	5
December Calendar	6
Fellowship Events Coffee Hour Volunteers Adult Education Breakfast with Santa	7
Mitten Tree Poinsettia order forms	8
Music & Worship Prayers Needed Midweek Eucharist Christmas Caroling	9
Congregational Meeting Christmas Eve Services	10

### Meditation

**Tuesday, December 19, at  
7:00 pm. Join in person on  
online.**

There is no experience needed.  
Wear comfortable clothes and  
enjoy a time of peace, quiet,  
and centering.

## OUTREACH

This a big “Thank You” to our church family from the Fellowship Committee and the Social Ministries Committee for all the help you have given to the activities at the church in 2023. Many of you do not realize just how much difference you each make but you do.

We will be taking a break from monthly missions for December and early in 2024. We hope to have some different areas to address in the new year. Please watch the upcoming Messenger issues to find out what they may be. Thank you all again for doing your part.

### Happy December Birthday to You!

May you enjoy many more and may God bless each one of you in many ways as you enjoy another year in God’s grace.

1 - Averi Starkweather	14 - Karen Kinser	30 - Amy Craig
2 - Michael Knapik	15 - Mercedes Gorby	30 - Paige Zeigler
2 - Trudy Mehl	15 - Jeff Webb	31 - Randy Cubick
2 - Ryan Edward Scott	18 - Joan Ellsworth	31 - Jordan Miller
2 - Kathi Trainer	20 - Fred Schuller	31 - Debra Garrott
5 - Colleen Carman	20 - Taylor Rhome	
5 - Kayla Trainer	23 - Judy Saunders	
7 - Grace Pifer	24 - Susan Skropits	
7 - James Rackley	25 - Holly Lucy	
8 - Leigh Ann Worley	26 - Marcy Supelak	



### HOLIDAY DONATIONS

Please consider donation any unwanted gift cards or store cash that can be used to buy items to donate this holiday season. We can make small changes that have big impacts.

### WE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBER:

**MARK HINES**

### CHRISTMAS DAY PRAYER

The following is a prayer meant to be used at the dinner table on Christmas Day.

Dear God, all thanks and praise to you for the gift of your son. By his birth you have come into the world to reveal your love. As we gather around this table, bless each of us with your presence that we will glorify you in all things. Bless this food that it will nourish us. Bless our time together that it will sustain us. Bless our families, friends and loved ones not with us, that they too will know the power of your Son’s birth. In Jesus’ most holy name we pray. Amen

## DECEMBER 2023—The Word of God in Worship

### December 3 First Sunday of Advent

#### Introduction

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

#### Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### Readings and Psalm

**Isaiah 64:1-9**, Prayer that God would come with power and compassion, **Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**, Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7), **1 Corinthians 1:3-9** Gifts of grace sustain those who wait for the end, **Mark 13:24-37** The sudden coming of the Son of Man.

### Sunday, December 10

#### Introduction

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

#### Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### Readings and Psalm

**Isaiah 40:1-11** Good news of God's coming to a people in exile, **Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13** Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13), **2 Peter 3:8-15a** Waiting for and hastening the day of God, **Mark 1:1-8** John appears from the wilderness.

### Sunday, December 17

#### Introduction

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

#### Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### Readings and Psalms

**Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11** Righteousness and praise flourish like a garden, **Psalm 126**, The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3), **Luke 1:46b-55** (alternate) You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52), **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24** Kept in faith until the coming of Christ, **John 1:6-8, 19-28** A witness to the light.

### Sunday, December 24

#### Introduction

In winter's deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus' birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

#### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

#### Readings and Psalm

**Isaiah 9:2-7** Light shines: a child is born for us, **Psalm 96** Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad. (Ps. 96:11), Titus 2:11-14, The grace of God has appeared, **Luke 2:1-14 [15-20]** God with us.

### Sunday, December 31

#### Introduction

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

#### Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

#### Readings and Psalm

**Isaiah 61:10--62:3**, Clothed in garments of salvation, **Psalm 148**, The splendor of the Lord is over earth and heaven. (Ps. 148:13), **Galatians 4:4-7**, Children and heirs of God **Luke 2:22-40** The presentation of the child.

December 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Note: All worship services are available in person and online.				1	2 8:00 am Breakfast with Santa 1:30 pm Webb Games Hall
3 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Christian Education	4 6:00 pm Girl Scouts	5 6:00 pm Decorate Sanctuary 7:00 pm Committee Meetings	6 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Bible Study	7 4:30 pm Catechism 6:15 pm Joybells 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	8 12:00 pm Deborah's 7:00 pm Euchre	9 9:00 am Yoga
10 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 0:45 am Christian Education	11 7:00 pm Grief Support	12 7:00 pm Church Council Meeting	13 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist 5:30 pm Youth Group 7:00 pm Bible Study	14 4:30 pm Catechism 6:15 pm Joybells 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	15 8:30 am Men's Breakfast	16
17 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 10:45 am Christian Education Newsletter Items Due	18 6:00 pm Girl Scouts	19 7:00 pm Meditation	20 10:00 am Bible Study 12:00 pm Midweek Eucharist 5:30 pm Youth Group 6:00 pm Christmas Caroling 7:00 pm Bible Study	21 4:30 pm Catechism 6:15 pm Joybells 7:15 pm Chancel Choir	22	23
24 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 6 pm Christmas Eve Worship 9:30 pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 Church Office closed Merry Christmas	26 5:00 pm Alliance Community Dinner	27	28	29	30
31 9:30 am Worship 10:30 am Fellowship						

## FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

### COFFEE HOUR

**December 3** - Jeff and Norita Webb  
**December 10** - Betsy Goshorn, Gail Kelly, Pat Nelson  
**December 17** - Dick and Cindy Miller, Karen Wolfe  
**December 24** - TBD  
**December 31** - TBD

If there needs to be a change made to the volunteer schedule, please try to find your own replacement and let the church office know what that change is. If you cannot find a replacement, please let me know and I will try to get that replacement for you. Donations of punch are also always appreciated. Thank you, Karen Wolfe

### EUCHRE

Friday, **December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm** in  
Garnes Hall.

You do not need to know how to play to join us. We will be happy to teach you.

### YOUTH GROUP

**EVERY WEDNESDAY AT  
5:30 PM**

All youth, regardless of church affiliation, are invited to a time of food, fellowship, games, and learning. **This is open to 1st grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.**

### DEBORAH CIRCLE

**The Deborah's will meet on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 pm at Chives** for their annual Christmas party. They will not meet in the months of January and February.

## ADULT EDUCATION

### **Wednesday Midday Bible Study at 10:00 AM.**

We are studying 1st Corinthians.

### **Wednesday Evening Bible Study at 7:00 PM.**

We are studying 1st Corinthians.

### **Tuesday Zoom Bible Study at 1:00 PM**

"How Lutherans Interpret Scripture." If you would like a copy of the study guide, contact Pastor Diana

Here is the link. It is the same link for all sessions.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85201147059?pwd=VHdMTWVrTjhZaEM5azlDcnZnSTh6Zz09>

You can also join in by calling 1-312-626-6799.

Meeting ID: 852 0114 7059 code: 809912

## BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

We will be having Breakfast with Santa on December 2nd. If you are interested in helping please let Josh Falconer know. **Breakfast with Santa** will be from **9 to 11 on December 2nd**. There is a **free breakfast for all** consisting of pancakes, sausage and fruit. There will be milk, juice and coffee as well. Kids young and old can get a free picture with Santa. We are asking for non perishable food items or cash donations for the food pantry.

## MITTEN TREE

The “**Mitten Tree**” will be in the Narthex from **November 1 through December 3**. We are collecting donations of mittens, gloves, hats and scarves, also, new and nearly new sweaters and sweatshirts. All items will be taken to the Salvation Army for distribution after that date. Thank you for considering to help with this worthwhile project.



## Poinsettia Order Form

Poinsettia Cost: \$11.00

Last Day to Order: **December 8, 2023**

How Many? \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory Of \_\_\_\_\_

Thankoffering For \_\_\_\_\_

By Whom \_\_\_\_\_

**By Mail:** You can fill in the above form, and along with your check, place in an envelope and mail to St. Paul's, 3295 S. Union Ave., Alliance, OH 44601.

**At the Church:** Forms will also be available on the table in Garnes Hall. Place your order and check or money in the box provided.



## MUSIC & WORSHIP

Music & Worship Committee will not meet in December as we will be decorating the Sanctuary that night.

**Reminder** – We are **decorating the church Sanctuary** on Tuesday, December 5th at 6:00. Please come to help us ready the church for the Advent and Christmas season.

**Reminder - The Annual Around the Table Carol Sing** will be held the first Sunday in Advent, December 3, 2023. We will gather at 5:00 and eat at 5:30. Please bring a main dish, salad or dessert to share (recommend 1 dish for every 2 people). Dinner rolls and drinks will be provided. Please bring your own table settings. Come out and enjoy the fellowship and time to prepare our hearts for the birth of our Lord!

We will have one service to celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent on December 24th and two services to celebrate Christmas Eve on December 24th. We hope you will be able to join us and celebrate the birth of our Lord!

**9:30 AM – 4th Sunday of Advent service**

**6:00 PM – Christmas Eve family service with candlelight**

**9:30 PM – Christmas Eve liturgical service with candlelight**

- **There will be no choir practices** on Thursday, December 28 or Thursday, January 4. Chancel Choir will resume January 11 and Joybells will resume January 18.

## PRAYERS NEEDED!

Due to Covid and many other reasons, our prayer chain needs updating!

When someone needs prayer, please call Pastor Muse or Gayle Fiegenschuh. If you want to be one of our “Prayer Warriors,” please see Gayle so our list can be revised. If you have a cell phone, that is helpful but not mandatory. We shall send out a message requesting prayer by group text so participants do not have to call everyone as we did previously.

PRAYERS MATTER!!!!

Gayle Fiegenschuh    330-823-9442, 330-417-3676

Pastor Muse            330-409-5775

St. Paul's Lutheran    330-823-2285

## MID-WEEK EUCHARIST

Our mid-week service will be moving back into the Chapel and will have an Advent focus for the month of December. The service begins at noon and lasts about twenty-five minutes. Come join us for this time of Word, prayer, and Eucharist.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS for Christmas Caroling on Wednesday, December 20 beginning at 6:00 pm. We will sing familiar carols to our shut-ins throughout Alliance and return back to the church for cookies, hot chocolate and fellowship. Please join us!

## ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

3295 S. Union Ave  
Alliance, OH 44601

Non-Profit Org.

U. S. Postage

PAID

ALLIANCE, OH

*Our purpose is to  
be the living body  
of Jesus Christ!*

Find us online!  
[www.livingbody.org](http://www.livingbody.org)  
[www.facebook.com/St.Pauls.Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/St.Pauls.Alliance)  
[www.twitter.com/PaulLutheran](https://www.twitter.com/PaulLutheran)  
[www.instagram.com/St.PaulsAlliance](https://www.instagram.com/St.PaulsAlliance)

Stay informed and sign up for *The Weekly Messenger* email on our website, Facebook page, or text 4STPAULS to 22828.

Email: [st.paulsalliance@outlook.com](mailto:st.paulsalliance@outlook.com)

Phone: 330-823-2285

Fax: 330-823-8399

The Reverend Timothy H. Muse - Lead Pastor  
The Reverend Diana Thompson - Administrative Pastor  
Rhonda Ferrall - Secretary  
Kathy Sloan - Organist  
Gina M. Falconer - Director of Music  
Gayle B. Fiegenschuh - Communion Minister and Visitation

### CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, January 28, 2024.

All reports for the congregational report are due to the church office by December 31.

### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Sunday December 24

at 9:30 am

6:00 pm

9:30 pm

The worship services will also be livestreamed.