



## **Next Bible Study Begins on Tuesday, May 7 on Homosexuality**

How do you read the Bible? How do you study the Bible? There are so many genres, stories, poems, songs, narratives, histories, and other types of biblical literature, it is hard to answer how we read the many books. For me, too often I read the Bible from a critical perspective, that is, I read it with the questions like, who wrote, to whom, and why permeate my mind. Certainly, there are times when bringing a discerning eye with a sense of intellectual curiosity is tremendously important to the task.

At times, I have to be intentional at simply letting the words and sentiments permeate my soul. Often, I get stuck in “analysis mode” rather than enjoy the beauty of the songs and poetry. During Lent I enjoyed the few weeks we spent with the Psalms, and I did my best to take the words into my heart and mind without overly analyzing them.

This is one reason I love Holy Week so much. On Maundy Thursday we had close to 60 people present. How wonderful! The reason I like doing the Tenebrae Service is hearing the different voices read the texts of the Passion narrative. As I said that night, we all play a part in the events of Holy Week. In the story of Jesus’ gathering with his disciples to break bread, in his arrest, trial, abandonment, and execution, there is great power in letting the story be the story. It needs no explanation.

Over the years of my professional life as a minister, I have tried to offer some studies that dig a bit deeper into the texts whereas other studies are more focused on the beauty of simply hearing the words. Serving two churches, I have bounced back and forth offering studies in both buildings. I have varied the times and days knowing there is never a perfect time to reach everybody.

Many of you lead very involved lives, and never consistently have the same morning, afternoon, or evening off that would enable you to attend. While this may be frustrating and discouraging for me (and I suspect for you too), it does not stop me from trying.

Starting on Tuesday, May 7, at 7:00 p.m. and running through early June (with the exception of May 14) in St. Peter’s fellowship hall, I will be offering between 4-6 week study on the Bible and homosexuality. This study will be made available via Zoom for those who cannot attend in person. Please let me know if you plan to attend either live or online.

Holy Week services proved to be meaningful and well attended. On Maundy Thursday, March 28, roughly 60 came to St. Paul's to participate in the service that night. Those who attended enjoyed some excellent soup provided by several from St. Paul's congregation, and a wonderful choir of approximately 14 people from both congregations joined forces in singing "Remember Me," led by Ed Novogratz. Those who made soup were: Cathy Conley, Donna and Don Biggs, Paula Spiece, Marge and Larry Oberly. Servers of the meal were: Stacy Knecht, Beth Butz, Heather Edelman, and Joyce Edelman. The service featured 10 readers, 5 from each congregation. Those who read were, from St. Paul's: Larry Oberly, Glenn Spiece, Kathy Kaintz, Mindy Does, and Karen Sands. From St. Peter's, the following people read: Meagan Mann, Dianna Fehnel, Taylor Sipos, Ashley Ecklof, and Ralph Fertig. Choir members from St. Peter's were: Bob and Diane Esch, Andrea Fella, Ralph and Nancy Fertig, Linda Flory, Jean Remaly, Jim Spengler, and Wayne Williamson. St. Paul's, the singers were: Don and Donna Biggs, Cathy Conley, Ruthann Feichtl, and Karen Sands.



## **Pastor Joel Participated in Good Friday Community Service**

On Friday, March 29, five UCC clergy from the area led a Stations of Cross Service at St. John's UCC, Mickleys at 12 Noon. Approximately 30 people from the differing congregations attended listening to the five clergy read 14 different stations of Jesus' journey to the cross. The following clergy participated: Rev. Steve Davis, St. John's Fullerton, Rev. James Gottwald, St. John's Laurys Station, Rev. Bob Gutekunst, Grace UCC, Northampton, Rev. Joel Biggers, St. Peter's and St. Paul's UCC, Rev. Virginia Schlegel, St. John's Mickleys, and Chris Unger, organist for St. John's Mickleys is also pictured below.



### **Leave a Legacy by Pastor Joel**

Have you considered leaving some of your estate to the church? If you haven't, we humbly ask that you consider doing so. Recently, I updated my beneficiary list and included both St. Peter's and St. Paul's in my estate planning. As someone who never had children, I like the idea that I may be able to leave a few dollars to family, friends, institutions, and churches that are important to me. I am not a wealthy man, but I know that every dollar I give to various organizations will go to something I value! Of course, we never know how much will be left when we do eventually go. Assuming I do not die broke (and I'm not sure that is a safe assumption), I would be pleased if some of my life's savings could go to help secure the future of St. Paul's UCC. Personally, I believe all congregations need to work to grow their endowments to secure the financial future of the congregation. The account where my money is held simply needed the name of our church and our tax identification number. St. Paul's tax id number is: 23-6285420.





# Church Potluck

The best food in the world is shared at potlucks! Join us on Sunday, May 5 after worship for great food and fellowship. Bring your favorite dish or dessert to share. Sign up in the narthex.



## Strengthen the Church Offering

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering will be received on Sunday, May 19. This offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC.

Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.



## Sunday School Trip to Hawk Mountain

**Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

Enjoy a day of being out in nature. It's migration time as the raptors head back north after escaping the cold winter. We'll enjoy a casual walk around Hawk Mountain to see these majestic birds in flight. In addition, we'll have the opportunity to learn more about birds of flight and maybe even meet one or more up close. We'll also visit the Education Center and enjoy a relaxing picnic together. All ages are welcome to join us!

Discounted trail rate \$5.00 (Sunday School students are free) Please sign up on the sheet on the Mission Table or email [mindy.does@yahoo.com](mailto:mindy.does@yahoo.com).



## BASKET SOCIAL



The Women of St. Paul's have decided to plan a Basket Social for October 5, 2024. Any donations of baskets, gift cards or monetary donations will be greatly appreciated. If anyone is interested in helping with the Basket Social or if you have any questions, please contact Cheryl Eroh at 610-428-3416 or Marge Oberly at 484-629-4233.



Volunteers are needed to work in the concession stand during the Iron Pigs games to help earn big bucks which benefit St. Paul's. Volunteers can sign up for the any or all of the following dates below:

May 25, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 21

Interested? Sign up in the narthex or call Brian Saylor at 610-740-4574.

### A Mother's Day Hymn

*Sing praise to our Creator God!  
Earth prospers from the way  
God "mothers" each new child into  
This world day after day.*

*God fabricates in motherhood  
A channel from above  
That longs to share with every child  
God's comfort, grace and love!*

*Sing praise to our Creator God,  
Who "mother's" us from birth!  
Providing what we truly need  
Throughout our lives on earth.*



- Peggy Ferrell

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!  
Sunday, May 12**

**St. Paul's UCC**  
**January – March 2024**



January Income:	\$13,263.50
January Expenses:	<u>17,904.85</u>
January expenses exceeds our income by:	(4,641.35)
February Income:	\$14,016.39
February Expenses:	<u>17,025.80</u>
February expenses exceeds our income by:	(3,009.41)
March Income:	\$25,934.93
March Expenses:	<u>27,508.61</u>
March expenses exceeds our income by:	(1,573.68)

**March income includes:**

- \$3,000.00 donation received to cover the cost of the new annex electrical panel.
- \$6,700.00 donation from the Bakers to install the new annex furnace.

**March expenses include:**

- Annex Electrical Panel Cost - \$2,900.00
- New Annex Furnace Cost - \$6,700.00
- Quarterly Property/Casualty Insurance - \$4,303.50



**A transfer of \$5,600.00** from the Reserve fund was needed to cover the January – March expenses.

**Lenten Offering:** - \$545.00

**One Great Hour of Sharing Offering:** \$473.00





St. Paul's Prayer Partners help to provide hope, spiritual support and help to bring a deep sense of comfort to someone going through a difficult time. If you would like to become a prayer partner, or have prayer requests/updates, please contact Sally Jane by email @ sallyjane1717@yahoo.com

**LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER:** Lenny Panik, Helen Snyder, Karen Klein, Shirley Edwards, Larry Saylor, Debbie Gable, Elizabeth Kish, Keith Beil, Lynnel Groller, Ann Guth, Peggy Kohler, Consistory, churches, nation and leaders, U.S. Military, many refugees, and persecuted Christians.

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### Shoofly Pie Sale

Order your Shoofly pies today! **These are the last pies for the summer!** The Bakers will resume baking in September. The deadline to order is Sunday, May 5. Pick up is Saturday, May 11 from 11 – 5 PM at the church. The cost is \$6.00 each. Sign up in the narthex or call 484-629-4233 to order.

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### Ham & Cheese Sandwich Sale

A Ham & Cheese Sandwich sale hosted by the Women of St. Paul's is on Wednesday, May 15. These hearty sandwiches are packed with thin sliced ham, cheese and served on a fresh baked kaiser roll (mustard packet included). The cost is \$4.00 each. **These are the last sandwiches for the summer!** The deadline to order is Sunday, May 5. Sign up in the narthex or call 484-629-4233 to order.

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### Redner's Save-A-Tape Program

Shop at Redner's? St. Paul's receives 1% of the total receipts submitted. Whole receipts (cut off receipts are not accepted) can be dropped off in the Redner's receipt bag in the narthex or dropped off at the church office. Thank you for saving those tapes!

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### Giant Gift Cards



If you shop at Giant, please consider participating in a great fundraising opportunity for St. Paul's through Giant's "Cash for Causes" program. **St. Paul's earns 5% of the face value of all the gift cards sold.** Gift cards are available in denominations of \$25, \$50 and \$100 and can be used like cash at any Giant location. If interested in purchasing gift cards, please contact Cindy Swankoski at 484-560-6542. Thank you for your participation.



# may ANNIVERSARIES

5/01 – Nancy & Joseph Richter  
5/04 – Mr. & Mrs. Edward Lapp  
5/07 – Mr. & Mrs. Gary Schaffer  
5/12 – Mr. & Mrs. Eric Bogar  
5/18 – Mr. & Mrs. Randy Snyder  
5/22 – Mr. & Mrs. Dustin Wagner  
5/28 – Mr. & Mrs. John Bing  
5/29 – Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Spiece  
5/31 – Mr. & Mrs. Edward Hawk, Jr

# may BIRTHDAYS

5/04 – Tavia Stopay  
5/05 – Jane Hoh  
Braiden Zeiner  
5/06 – Ronald Reichard  
5/07 – Gary Schaffer  
5/10 – Ethel Strohl  
Marge Oberly  
Ken Knappenberger  
5/17 – Sally Jane Payson  
Linda Thurber  
5/19 - Jaelyn Bogar  
5/20 – Cheryl Eroh  
5/22 – Zoltan Bedocs, Sr  
Sara Demczyszyn  
5/24 – Susan Demczyszyn  
5/27 – Samantha Chromiak



Are you missing from our list? Let Christine know at [stpaulsnorth@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsnorth@gmail.com) or call the church office at 610-261-2910.



- May 1** – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)  
**May 2** – 7:00 – Choir Rehearsal  
**May 3** – 6:00 – Live & Aloud Worship Service @ St. Paul's  
**May 5** – 9:00 – Sunday School  
10:30 – Worship w/Communion & Church Potluck  
Deadline for Shoofly Pie and Ham & Cheese Sandwich orders  
**May 6** – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)  
**May 8** – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)  
**May 9** – 6:30-8:30 – Girl Scouts (FH)  
7:00 – Choir Rehearsal  
**May 11** – (11-5 pm) Pick Up Shoofly Pies (FH)  
**May 12** – 9:00 – Sunday School  
10:30 – Worship/Mother's Day/Deadline for June/July Newsletter Articles  
**May 13** – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)  
**May 15** – 11-1 & 5-6 pm (Pick Up Ham & Cheese Sandwich Orders (FH)  
7:00 – Scouts (FH)  
**May 16** – 7:00 – Choir Rehearsal  
**May 18** – 10:00 – Dream Team Meeting (Annex)  
**May 19** – (8-12 noon) Scout Pancake Breakfast (FH)  
9:00 – Sunday School  
10:30 – Worship w/Strengthen the Church Offering  
**May 20** – 7:00 – AA (Parlor)  
**May 21** – 6:30 – Consistory (Annex)  
**May 22** – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)  
**May 23** – (6:30-8:30) Girl Scouts (FH)  
**May 25** – 7:00 – Volunteers @ IronPigs Game  
**May 26** – 9:00 – Sunday School  
10:30 – Worship  
**May 27** – Memorial Day (Office Closed)  
**May 29** – 7:00 – Scouts (FH)



**Pastor** – Rev. Joel Biggers  
**Organist** – Edward Novogratz  
**Director of Christian Ed.** – Melinda Does  
**Office Administrator** – Christine Hostetter  
**Custodian** – Shea Killeen  
**Church Office Phone** – 610-261-2910  
**E-mail** – [stpaulsnorth@gmail.com](mailto:stpaulsnorth@gmail.com)  
**Website** – [www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org](http://www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org)

**Pastor's Office Hours:** Thursday & Friday from 9:00-5:00 PM. Pastor Joel can be reached by email [joelwbiggers@gmail.com](mailto:joelwbiggers@gmail.com) or by calling 732-853-4809.

**Church Office Hours:** Mon., (8-12) Tues., Wed., Thurs. (8-3)

