

Next Bible Study Begins on Tuesday, May 7 on Homosexuality

How do you the 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 May14) 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. Pauls, 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.

Dream Team to Meet

Do you have a hope or a desire for the future of St. Paul's? Your opinion matters, and we want to know your opinion. For the past few months, various people have gathered on Saturday morning from 10-12 to dream and plan. We will meet again on Saturday, May 18, at 10:00 a.m. at the annex. All are welcome.

Join Me in A Book by Pastor Joel

Here is a list of books that I recently read, or am currently reading, or hope to dive into soon. Next to the title, is a number ranging from 1-10. Ten means I highly recommend it and 1 means I did not find it valuable. If there is no number, it means I have not read it or enough of it to give an assessment.

The EXvangelicals-Loving, Living, and Leaving the White Evangelical Church, by Sarah McCammon...10.

Not Your Parents Offering Plate, by J. Clif Christopher....7.

<u>Unclobber Rethinking Our Misuse of The Bible On Homosexuality</u>, by Colby Martin...8.

What The Bible Really Says About Homosexuality, by Daniel Helminiak....8.

Awe The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life, by Dacher Keltner.

Matthew The Gospel of Promised Blessings, by Matthew L. Skinner.





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 a young adults.





Sunday School Trip to Hawk Mountain

Saturday, May 11th

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.



North Street Mission

Wooster, Ohio

Volunteer Projects: We will begin each morning by serving breakfast to the homeless at our host location. Each day following breakfast, we will work with one of several community organizations such as People to People Ministries (local food pantry), Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Habitat for Humanity, Community Gardens, Every Women's House (domestic violence shelter), Friendship Meals, and the Wilderness Center.

Educational Activities: We will become more aware of the challenges that the community faces through a variety of educational programs. Wooster is located in the heart of Ohio's Amish and Mennonite communities which we will explore while we are here.

Date: Sunday, June 23 – Saturday, June 29. If you are interested, please sign up at the Mission Table or contact Mindy Does at mindy.does@yahoo.com

Adopt-a-Mile of the Wooster, Ohio Mission Trip

The miles are adding up through the **Adopt-A-Mile** program! For each \$5.00 donation, you can directly sponsor two of these miles and help us spread the love of God to our neighbors. Miles can also be adopted "In Honor of" or "In Memory of" family members and loved ones. With your adopted mile, you'll receive:

- * a certificate showing the mile(s) you've sponsored
- * special Sponsor's recognition at the Thank You Tea that will take place after our return
- * the sponsored name will appear on our interactive, online map

To sponsor a mile, talk to Mindy or Sam Does before or after Worship or contact us through the church website www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org

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: 17,904.85

January expenses exceeds

our income by: (4,641.35)

February Income: \$14,016.39 February Expenses: 17,025.80

February expenses exceeds

our income by: (3,009.41)

March Income: \$25,934.93 March Expenses: 27,508.61

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.

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.

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.

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!

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.

GIVE HOPE!

Our local families in need benefit greatly from your donations to the Northampton Food Bank. Items currently needed are **Peanut butter & jelly**, **boxed potatoes**, **canned soup/stew**, **pancake mix**, **pancake syrup**, **canned pasta**, **Cereal (low sugar)**, **canned tuna/chicken and monetary donations**. Non-perishable food items and monetary donations can be dropped off at church or the church office. Thanks for caring and sharing!



May:

05/05 – Chrissy Wisniewski Matthew Hoh

05/12 - Marge & Larry Oberly

05/19 – John Demczyszyn Cheryl Eroh

05/26 - Penny & Dave Farkas



May:

05/05 - Phyllis Bartholomew

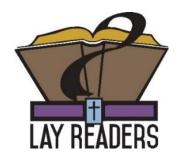
05/12 - Marge & Larry Oberly

05/19 - Phyllis Bartholomew

05/26 - Ronald Lobach

The cost to sponsor the Altar flowers is \$20.00 and the Bulletins is \$10.00. Please sign up in the narthex or call the church office @ 610-261-2910 if you would like to sponsor.

Note: There are **two** spaces available to sign up on the altar flower chart in the narthex. You are encouraged to sign up for any date even if someone else already has. Thank you for sponsoring!



May:

05/05 - Ruthann Feichtl

05/12 – Jennifer Dries

05/19 - Brian Saylor

05/26 - Nancy Richter



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



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 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

Website -www.stpaulsnorthamptonpa.org

Pastor's Office Hours: Thursday & Friday from 9:00-5:00 PM. Pastor Joel can be reached by email <u>joelwbiggers@gmail.com</u> or by calling 732-853-4809.

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

