**“The Messenger”**

**SPETEMBER 2025**

 **St. Paul’s UCC (513-422-4519); Rev. Rich Luh, Pastor (937-993-5464)**

**“TOUCHDOWN!”**

Guess what? It’s football season again! Yes, Ohio State and the NFL season has begun again for 2025, and many people will be glued to their sets anxiously awaiting the kickoff for their favorite team.

The excitement starts in preseason and increases as the regular season progresses. Funny how much people care about this sport – even if they don’t fully understand all the rules and all the intricate aspects of the game. But, low and behold, they have their favorite players and cheer them on week in and week out. People will even schedule vacations around key games, so they don’t miss the live action. The true fans line up hours before the game starts and engage in lengthy pregame festivities – known more commonly as tailgate parties.

Now I know that church attendance does not come close to the excitement of a sports game attendance. But wouldn’t it be great if it did? Wouldn’t it be nice if people got as excited about doing the Lord’s work through the church as they are when cheering on their favorite team?

You see, in a religious sense, God is the General Manager of His Faith Team. Jesus is the Coach, and we are all called to be part of the team – as both players and as cheerleaders. The players of all ages (just look at Aaron Rodgers) are still able to put forth a good effort on the field of life. Now our contracts are no comparison to what actual NFL players receive or hold out for. Our reward is far greater than any amount of money other team owners shell out year in and year out.

Our ultimate rewards involve eternal life in His heavenly kingdom and deep and spiritually enriching experiences in helping one another out, making our homes, our communities, our state and nation – and even the world a better place in which to live. How’s that for enticement to play for God’s Team?

Now with this team, we play on the field of life – but still go by some of the football rules and regulations. Our quarterback is Jesus, and he will hand off the ball to those of us who are willing to carry it down that field or throw to those who are willing to catch it. Now the players need to be ready to fend off the opponent – in this case Satan and those of his followers who will at every opportunity try to tackle us for a loss or intercept us and set us back far from the end zone we are shooting for. We need to be strong in our faith – we need to prepare ourselves for the game. We need to pray before each game for spiritual strength to do the best we can as we work our way through the field of life.

We need to remember that for our protection, the Holy Spirit abides in each of us and will provide us with the assurance that Christ’s love is with us each moment of our lives and will guide us down the field amidst all the challenges that await us. He will never abandon us and will give us the inner strength to overcome any obstacles that come our way.

With that knowledge, we indeed can become invincible in our efforts to bring victory to God’s Team and glory and honor to His name and that each of us can reap the eternal rewards there for us to enjoy.

Now that’s some game plan, isn’t it? What a General Manager. What a coach? What excitement this can bring to us not just on certain days of the week as it is in the College or NFL ranks – but every day! And what about the cheerleaders for this team? Well, these are the ones who have grown up with a lot of experience in their lives and can help assist the younger players by coaching them as to how best to play – something like coaches on NFL and College teams do for their players. With their vast experience, they can do a lot of the behind the scenes work in making sure that this team produces the best result that they can.

So basically, no matter what age you are at, no matter what skills you have or don’t realize, being on this Team will be a great opportunity for you to be able to do God’s work here on earth like you never could before – as individuals, and as a church body. The touchdown is a goal for NFL and College players – but our goal is to be able to touch the lives of people we meet with God’s love, compassion, forgiveness and caring. Are you ready to play? God awaits our answer. Let’s make this Fall season a season to truly remember! ***TOUCHDOWN!***

**SHALOM,**

**PASTOR RICH**

 **LAY READERS USHERS GREETERS**

7 - Corrine Lowman Larry/Darlene Adams Rick Lyons

14 – Hillary Fraley Carl/Jennifer Batliner John Williams

21 – Marsha Minge Tom/Marcia Shibley Corrine Lowman

28 – Dan Flory M.Minge**/**C.Lowman Steve/Judy Green

**September** by George Arnold

Sweet is the voice that calls from babbling waterfalls in meadows where the downy seeds are flying; and soft the breezes blow, and eddying come and go, in faded gardens where the rose is dying. Among the stubbled corn the blithe quail pipes at morn, the merry partridge drums in hidden places, the glittering insects gleam above the reedy stream, where busy spiders spin their filmy laces. At eve, cool shadows fall across the garden wall, and on the clustered grapes to purple turning; and pearly vapors lie along the eastern sky, where the broad harvest moon is redly burning. Ah, soon on field and hill the winds shall whistle chill, and patriarch swallow call their flocks together to fly from frost and snow, and seek for lands where blow the fairer blossoms of a balmier weather.

The pollen-dusted bees search for the honey-lees that linger in the last flowers of September, while plaintive mourning doves coo sadly to their loves of the dead summer they so remember. The cricket chirps all day, “O fairest summer, stay!” The squirrel eyes askance the chestnuts browning; the wild fowl fly afar above the foamy bar and hasten southward ere the skies are frowning. Now comes a fragrant breeze through the dark cedar trees, and round about my temples fondly lingers, in gentle playfulness, like to the soft caress bestowed in happier days by loving fingers. Yet, though a sense of grief comes with the falling leaf, and memory makes the summer doubly pleasant, in all my autumn dreams a future summer gleams, passing the fairest glories of the present.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE**

**2 – Judy Green MAY YOU HAVE A WONDERFUL**

**14 – John Williams CELEBRATION!**

**21 – Nathan Flory**

**BIBLE STUDY RESUMES**

Our Bible Study begins again on **Monday, September 8th** 1-2pm in the Church Parlor. We will begin studying the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians, Chapters 6,7,8. Please feel free to join us for our study.

**A THANK YOU**

From Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County:

On behalf of everyone at Big Brothers Big Sisters, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your generous donation of $450.00. Your support means the world to us and plays a vital role in helping us fulfill our mission of empowering and enriching the lives of young individuals in need.

With your contribution, we can continue to match young people with mentors who can provide guidance, support, and friendship. Your commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of these children and adolescents is truly inspiring. Every dollar you’ve donated brings us one step closer to **CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES** for these young individuals.

Once again, thank you for your support. We are grateful for your partnership and commitment to creating positive change in our community. We still have over 150 kids on our waiting list. We are trying to ERASE THE WAIT. If someone in your congregation would make a good mentor, please tell them about Big Brothers Big Susters.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the impact of your donation, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

**Sincerely,**

**Scott D. Stephens, LISW-S 513 – 867-1227** *What a wonderful and unexpected gift!*

We are happy to help this worthwhile program. Certainly, if anyone can be a mentor, this would be a great way to put your faith into action.

**Ponder: “**Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can”. ***John Wesley***

**CAN YOU PROVIDE A SCHOLARSHIP TODAY?**

With your help, we can provide scholarships to send children in our community to school at Abilities First! Our Autism: Learning Center provides an “out of this world” education to children in preschool through 2nd grade with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

Now when you donate to Abilities First, you can get FREE MONEY! Abilities First has been designated an Ohio Scholarship Granting Organization. When you donate through our partner, Every Child Every Family, you will receive a dollar-for-dollar Ohio tax credit up to $750.00 per individual or $1,500 for spouses filing jointly. Plus, your donation will be funding scholarships for our students!

Learn more and donate: https://www.abilitiesfirst.org/give

**COME, BE EXCITED TO JOIN US FOR WORSHIP!**

7 – “A NEW IDENTITY” HOLY COMMUNION

14 – “GROWING IN GOD’S LOVE”; CHURCH COUNCIL MEETS

21 – GUEST SPEAKER

28 – “SURPRISING INVESTMENT”

**REMEMBER**

*The value of time, the success of perseverance, the pleasure of working, the dignity of simplicity, the worth of character, the power of kindness, the influence of example, the obligation of duty, the wisdom of economy, the virtue of patience, the improvement of talent, the joy of originating.*

***SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS!***

On numerous occasions, many of our members have been thanked for their contribution to the life of St. Paul’s. But one group that has not been recognized often enough is our younger members: **Kaitlynne and Austin Schultz, Calleigh, Sabrina and CJ Barraclough, and Cole Quast. N**ow I wish to lift them up for their involvement in the life of our church body. They have all served as Acolytes, and most have Lay read and Calleigh has been doing the Children’s message and conducting a small Sunday School Class and Sabrina has also lent her musical talents to our worship. Plus, all of them have played in the Bell Choir. Austin, Katie and Calleigh have also been helping serve a dinner for the homeless for the past few years. We salute you for being great examples of young people who have the willingness to get involved! We are proud of all of you!

**REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS AND OTHERS IN NEED OF PRAYER:**

Anne Turner, Charlene Hale, Ruby McQuade, Pat Beatty, Pastor Jeff Wilder, Sue Luh, Susan Hannah, Abby Alexander, Kip, Becky Hall, Jack Kiniyalocts, Bryan Canter, Sue Luh

***DID YOU KNOW***: The story behind the hymn, **“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY”**

Reginal Heber was born in the area of Cheshire, England in 1783 of scholarly and well-to-do parents. At the age of 17, he entered Oxford University. Following his ordination into the Anglican Church, he served for the next 16 years in a little village of Hodnet. Throughout his ministry he was known and respected as a man of rare refinement and noble Christian character. In 1823, just three years before his early death, he was sent to India to serve as Bishop of Calcutta. One year after his untimely death from a heat stroke, his collection of fifty-seven choice hymns was published by his widow and friends.

This hymn was written by Reginald specifically for use on Trinity Sunday. The emphasis of this service is to reaffirm the doctrine of the Triune Godhead. In 1861 this tune was composed by Dr. John B. Dykes, a popular composer of over 300 hymns, some of which were: “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee” and “O for a Closer Walk with God”.

**ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE MEETS**

Planning for the 150th anniversary of St. Paul’s, the committee is headed by Darlene Adams and Steve Schnabl, and their first meeting will be held in Friendship Hall on **Tuesday, September 2nd at 1pm**. They will first discuss what souvenir we should have for this special event, which will be celebrated next year. If you have any ideas for this celebration, please let either of them know.

***GO IN PEACE, SERVE THE LORD JOYOUSLY!***