

Rooted in the past,
living faithfully in the present

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

December
2020

*"By listening to
the still
speaking God,
we seek to
connect people
to God and to
others through
worship,
service, and
fellowship."*

We are a church
that values:

Welcome

Fellowship

Outreach

Tradition

 **God
is still
speaking,**

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

"Who Comes to Us!"

Yes, indeed, Christmas time rings out those words. Of course, for the young at heart, that means Santa is on his way to bring gifts for all good boys and girls! But there is a more important person we celebrate on Christmas – a person who gives us the gift of new life and hope for us now and in the future. Jesus the Christ is born!

Is He born in a palatial setting; amidst servants and beautiful crib adornments and a joyfully decorated nursery, filled with all sorts of toys and other gadgets that only the rich can afford?

No, not this child! He is born in a cave and placed in a feed trough with some straw to serve as a bed. There are no toys, no fancy baby clothes – for He is wrapped in rags; no people surrounding Him but His parents and a few animals.

Does He have royal visitors dropping in to ogle over Him and lavish ornate gifts in His honor? Does He have nursery maids scurrying around to meet his every need?

No, not this child! He is visited by shepherds, who anxiously tell Mary about the visit they had with an angelic host. Mary was left to tend to this tiny infant, together with Joseph, on their own. Not much unlike many new parents faced back in the olden days – before medical facilities were common - place. And royalty? Why Joseph was a carpenter and Mary was a sixteen year--old girl.

Christmas is a time when gifts are exchanged and there is an air of good-will toward all. But, alas, this feeling of joy and happiness lasts only until the bills roll in and the dreariness of the winter season falls upon us. Now that is the commercial aspect of the season – one which we all get caught up in in one way or another.

But, if we really focus on what this season – what Christmas is actually about – the coming of the Christ Child into our lives – then we can continue to experience the joy and good-will feelings every day of our life. This event; this wonderful happening, is not a one - shot deal!

God come to us through this Child; and this Child comes to us in our hearts, as a steadfast reminder of God's unfailing love for all of us. This indescribable gift awaits you and I to open our hearts to receive it in all its glory – in all its splendor – in all its promise and to share it with one another.

So, while Santa only comes once a year – the Christ Child comes to us every day – every hour – every minute of our lives to encourage us to live and share the love, hope, joy, and peace of God's gift to us.

On behalf of myself and my wife, Sue and our Grandchildren, Sabrina, Crystal, Calleigh, Austin, CJ and Kaitlynne, we wish you all a most blessed Christmas and safe and healthy holiday season.

PASTOR RICH



This season we are having an angel tree – located in Friendship Hall – where we have names of residents from Majestic Nursing Home and their Christmas “Wish List” available for you to choose. Now, these are people who have no family or family that leaves anywhere near them and it is a way to bring some joy into their lives at Christmastime. We ask you to prayerfully consider taking one on the angels and buying some items for them. All gifts must be returned to the church by DECEMBER 20TH.

We appreciate your thoughtful consideration in this outreach project.

This mission will officially open up at our church on Tuesday, March 2nd. We are looking for spring clothing, shoes, money to buy socks, underwear, diapers. We are also looking for donations of hangers and racks. If you have any of these, please drop them off in the Library room – which is where the Closet will be located.

Our plan is to have operating hours from 10-2 pm on Tuesdays. Volunteers are welcomed to sign-up to help out. Thank you for your thoughtful and prayerful consideration.

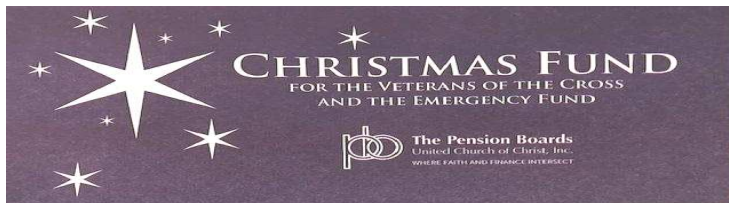
Clothes Closet

*"I needed clothes and
you clothed me."*

Matthew 25:38

Attention all who are turning twelve next year, I am organizing a Class for Confirmation to start in January and run through early May, with Confirmation taking place on Pentecost Sunday. If you are interested, **please let me know by December 20th** at 937-993-5464 or email me at revluh@hotmail.com.

CONFIRMATION



Decembers Special Offering

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas “Thank You” Gift Checks.



BELLS ARE RINGING!

Thanks to the dedicated effort of Barb Flory, we will have a Bell Choir once again. Sabrina Barraclough will work with people interested in playing the bells – we will be practicing right after church each Sunday – and then perform sometime in December. Please come and join with us for this musical ministry.

Our special thanks goes out to Barb, who arranged for the bells to be repaired and tuned up. She has been at work on this for the past six weeks and we appreciate all her efforts!

Speaking about music, we are always proud to have Marsha Minge as our Choir Director and soloist. Her singing and Barb's playing add so much to the worship experience and we are privileged to have them both as dedicated members of the church. Well done, good and faithful servants!

Thank you to everyone who throws there extra change into the basket every Sunday. Thanks to you we were able to donate \$100.00 to the Family Service Food Pantry for the holiday season



*A Heartfelt Thank you from
Jerry O'Connor*

11/12/2020

Members and Friends of St. Paul,
The note I received from so many who signed was greatly appreciated. It has been a difficult time for me, losing Barbara and Kathy with in such a short time has required a major adjustment in my life.

Our time in Middletown was so special in our lives-Kathy and David sort of grew up there and always thought of St. Paul as their "Home" church.

Kathy fought the good fight to live as full a life a she could in her 50 years. So many memories, many of them made while at St. Paul's.

Thank you for your prayers, they have meant a lot....

Sincerely...
Jerry O'Connor

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*Sincerely,
Jerry O'Connor*

**Don't forget to pick up
your poinsettia after
church on Christmas
Eve**



We continue to pray for our homebound members and those with on-going health concerns:

Virginia Elam Lorraine Clark Cleo Habig
Charlene Hale Frances Stoutenborough
Velma Griffith Mike Davies

December 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Bible Study 1pm	2	3	4	5
6 Bell Choir Practice 11:30 am	7	8 Bible Study 1pm	9	10	11	12
13 Bell Choir Practice 11:30 am	14	15 Bible Study 1pm	16	17	18	19
20 Bell Choir Practice 11:30 am	21	22 Bible Study 1pm	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 4:30 pm	25 	26
27	28	29	30	31 		

* Bible studies are held in Friendship Hall @ 1pm on Tuesdays.
Safe social distancing is practiced

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 8, 2020

Meeting held in the Sanctuary due to Covid-19.

Establishment of quorum: Art IV, Sec B of the Constitution required 10% of voting members to be present. We had 101 members on January 1, 2019. A total of 10 members are needed. 22 members were present for the meeting.

OPENING PRAYER - Co-Moderator - Rick Lyons

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from July 12, 2020 Congregational Meeting
Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes. Dan Meeker/Bryan Canter. Motion passed.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED 2021 CHURCH BUDGET - Bryan Canter
There was not a line by line budget handed out. Instead, Bryan presented the budget line by line.

DISCUSSION & VOTE for proposed budget - Barb Flory/Rick Lyons
Questions concerning the budget were called for and answered by Bryan. A motion was made & seconded to accept the proposed 2021 budget. Roger Britton/Chuck Clark. Motion passed.

CO-MODERATORS' COMMENTS - Barb Flory/Rick Lyons
Barb & Rick thanked Bryan for his work in putting together the budget and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

CLOSING LITANY - Psalm 67
The meeting ended with the reading of the Psalm 67 in unison.

Respectfully submitted by
Judith S Brewer,
Church Council Secretary

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 8, 2020

PRESENT: Pastor Rich Luh, Bryan Canter, Rick Lyons, Barb Flory, Chuck Clark, Darlene Adams, Larry Adams & Judy Brewer. ABSENT: Julie Ratliff

OPENING PRAYER: Darlene Adams

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from October 11, 2020. Motion made to approve the minutes.
Barb/Chuck. Motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Motion made to approve the agenda as amended. #7 added to New Business - Church members needed for a quorum. Darlene/Bryan. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT. The record keeping program will be much easier to handle with the start of 2021. All the numbers will be reset to zero so we will not continue to carry over wrong numbers from previous years.

PASTOR'S REPORT - PASTOR LUH.

1. Since the last council meeting, Pastor Luh has been making numerous phone calls to shut-ins and members and made a visit to Cleo Habig.
2. He also attended his first ministerial meeting at First United and delivered the candy we collected to the Pastor of First Christian Church for their Trunk or Treat.
3. Bible Study continues on Tuesday afternoons.
4. The Toten Fest Service will be November 22 and the Advent Service of Carols and Readings at first Christian Church is set for 3pm on November 29th at their church.
5. A Clothes Closet meeting is scheduled for November 12th at 7pm here at the church. This will be an informational-formation meeting with other churches. Additional information will be forthcoming.
6. Pastor Luh made a proposal that the church has an "Angel Tree" during the Christmas season. People could take a name of a resident from Majestic Nursing Home who does not have family or family that lives close by and purchase a gift for them. The "Angel" would have the name of the resident and what they would like to receive. We would start on the first Sunday of Advent - November 29th and run through December 20th. Pastor Luh would then take the gifts to the nursing home the Monday before Christmas and the workers would then distribute them to the residents.

NEW BUSINESS

- Installation of Pastor Luh. This has been postponed until Spring due to Covid 19.
- What is our plan if our county goes color purple? We will do services remote.
- Christmas decorations and Hanging of the Greens. Larry & Darlene will put up the trees and big decorations during the week of Thanksgiving. The Hanging of the Greens Will be Sat. Nov. 28 starting at 9:00am.
- 4. Ricoh printer - Our printer is not meeting our current needs. Prosource is offering a Konica Monolta bizhub C300i which is a better fit for our needs. It also has a quicker response time for repairs. A motion was made to go through Prosource for the printer and maintenance contract. Judy/Chuck Motion passed.

5. Accounting Errors. Ann supplied a handout explaining some errors that she made.
6. November Special Offering. The offering for November goes to Access Counseling.

This money will go for the purchase of hats.

- 6a. We have to date a balance of \$36.51 in the account for Family Service/Choice Pantry. A motion was made to add \$63.49 to make a total of \$100.00 to be given to Family Service/Choice Pantry for the purchase of turkeys. Bryan/Chuck. Motion passed.
7. Quorum needed for church business. When a quorum is needed for a vote only church members can be counted. Pastor Luh will reach out to see if there are congregants that would like to become members.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Handbells - Barb has been working with the gentleman who is going to be refurbishing the bells. His cost estimate for the necessary work to be done is under the cap that council set at the last meeting. The bells will be picked up, refurbished and brought back.

CO-MODERATORS' REPORTS - Barb & Rick. No report.

SERVICE - Julie & Judy. No report.

WORSHIP - Barb & Darlene. No report

FELLOWSHIP - Chuck. No report

PROPERTY - Rick & Larry. Window blinds and security grills need to be installed on the back windows. Larry will get estimates.

BUDGET & FINANCE - Bryan. Extra money was taken out for the windows last month.

Otherwise, the amounts are holding steady.

NEXT MONTH: December 13, 2020

NEXT MONTH OPENING PRAYER: Larry

Attendance: October 2020 - 99 (25/4 week average)

October 2019 - 107 (27/4 week average)

Respectfully submitted by

Judith S Brewer,

Church Council Secretary

DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS

DATE	GREETERS	USHERS	LITURGIST	Open/ Close
12/06	J. Ratliff	L & D Adams	C. Lowman	John W.
12/13	L. Adams	C. & J. Batliner	C. Burnett	John W.
12/20	R. Lyons	T & M Shibley	J. Brewer	John W.
12/24	J. Rockwell	C. Burnett	Special Service	John W.
		C. Clark		
12/27	C. Clark	S & J Green	D. Flory	John W.

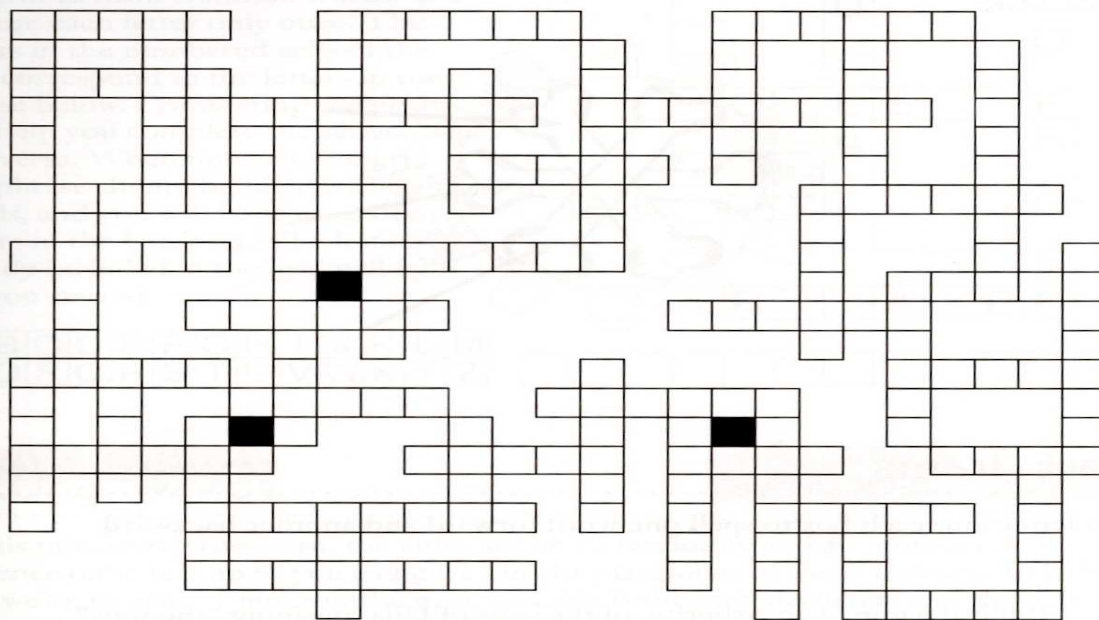
Level 4

Names of Biblical Characters

ANALYSIS

PLANNING

Use each of the words, names, and acronyms found in the bank below to complete this clueless crossword grid. The puzzle has only one solution.

**4 letters**

Anna
Lois
Mary
Noah
Puah
Ruth

5 letters

Cozbi
Dinah
Eglah

Ephah

Hagar
Helah
Lydia
Naomi
Orpah
Rhoda
Sarah
Tamar
Timna

6 letters

Dorcas
Esther
Eunice
Hannah
Hoglah
Huldah
Joanna
Judith

Keziah

Maacah
Martha
Phoebe
Prisca
Reumah
Salome
Tirzah
Zeresh
Zilpah

7 letters

Abigail
Abishag
Damaris
Ephrath
Haggith

8 letters

Athaliah
Basemath

Herodias

Peninnah
Sapphira
Shimrith
Tryphosa

9 letters

Elizabeth
Hephzibah

73

Answers on page 94.

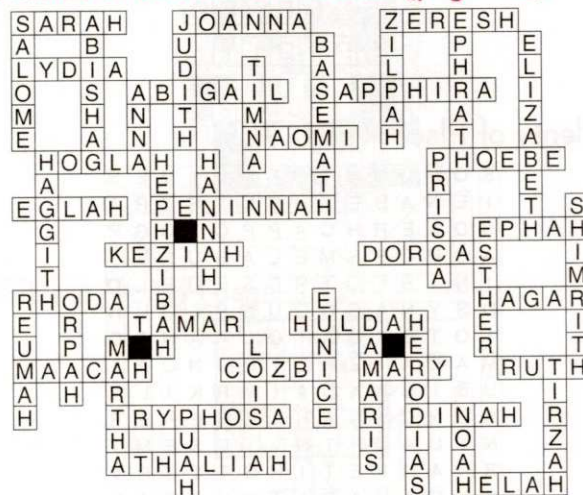
Merry Christmas



I wish the love of Christ
fills your home and life and
makes each day to release
countless blessings
for you.

Christmas.365greetings.com

Names of Biblical Characters (page 73)



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
114 S. BROAD STREET
MIDDLETOWN OHIO 45044

OPEN AND AFFIRMING
10:15 a.m. Worship Service

Nursery Provided • Lift to Sanctuary • Handicap Accessible
Holy Communion celebrated on the first Sunday of the month.

Rev. Rich Luh, Pastor
Marsha Minge, Choir Director • Barbara Flory, Pianist



Pastors Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday 9:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m. or by appointment
Church Office Hours Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday 11am-2pm
Office 513-422-4519 **E Mail:** stpaulsuccmidd@att.net
WEB PAGE: stpaulsuccmidd.org