

Rooted in the past,
Living faithfully in the present

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

February
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

We are now nearing the end of what is known as the Season of Epiphany in the Christian calendar. The Season of Epiphany commemorates major events in Jesus' life, namely the visit from the Wisemen, his Baptism, and his turning water into wine at the Wedding in Cana. It ends with Jesus' presentation at the Temple.

There are a couple more general meanings of the word epiphany. It can be a religious term that refers to an appearance or manifestation especially of a divine being. So in Greek mythology and Hindu mythology there is a range of epiphanies, the appearance of various gods to bring a message or reveal a judgment.

Lastly, there is the common usage we hear a lot. This is how the Merriam-Webster dictionary puts it:

a (1) : a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something

I experienced an epiphany listening to Beethoven's 9th Symphony – I saw the truth of God – that would be an example of this definition.

(2) : an intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking (3) : an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure

b : a revealing scene or moment

An example of these definitions? Today, I had an epiphany – Winter in New England is no fun.

Epiphanies at their most powerful lead to transformation, to some kind of conversion to a new way of being. In the epiphany experienced by the wise men who come to visit baby Jesus this is certainly true. They come and are changed. They head back home different somehow. They feel closer to God. They experienced a moment of deep peace and redemption and they journey home with a sense of freedom and a deeper insight into the meaning of Grace.

With the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, we can imagine something changed in John in the process of baptizing Jesus. John experienced the real meaning of humility and selflessness in Jesus. He also heard the voice of God claiming Jesus as his beloved.

But I also think Jesus experienced some kind of transformation.

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COUNCIL MINUTES

JANUARY 12, 2020

PRESENT: Chuck Clark, Rick Lyons, Larry Adams, Darlene Adams, Judy Brewer, Rev. Don Erickson.

ABSENT: Barb Flory, Julie Ratliff.

OPENING PRAYER: Judy

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 8, 2019: Chuck/Larry

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Chuck/Bryan

TREASURER'S REPORT: Approved to file for audit. Bryan/Rick

PASTOR'S REPORT – Rev. Don

I continue to focus on Sunday services, pastoral care availability, a religious education offering and having regular office hours. I am averaging 15 hours a week.

As for religious education, we will begin a new book and discuss it Tuesdays, 2 pm at the Triple Moon Cafe. The book is titled *Christianity After Religion* by Diana Butler Ross. It discusses the increasing number of people who self-describe as “spiritual but not religious” and how the church might respond to this demographic change in America.

I have a few things I am contemplating for the future:

1. An post Sunday service, Ask the Pastor/Open

Discussion time where people can stop by with questions, thoughts, ponderings, etc. or just a personal chat with me.

2. Occasionally having worship in the Chapel. It is a nice change of pace and a little more close-knit of an experience.

3. Open Pulpit Night where folks would be invited to come, sign-up, and share music, a prayer, a reading, a sermonette, etc..

Lastly, I have emailed Chad Clark at United Theological Seminary in Dayton about possibly getting some seminarians to preach and officiate services in the future.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review, make changes, & approve the security plan. Larry has a written emergency/security plan that will be presented to the congregation within the next couple of weeks.
2. Narcan Training. Charlene went to the Shalom meeting on 1/8 and received some Narcan (Nasal) to keep in the office. Formal training will be arranged for the church members that might be interested in learning how to administer Narcan to those in need. It was also discussed that the church does not have a defibrillator. Rick will check on the cost and availability of getting one.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Profile. Work is continuing on the church profile. It is the hope that it will be completed and sent in by the end of January.
2. Cell phone for the minister. Rev. Don now has a cell phone for emergency use. The number is 513-320-7441. The phone will be passed down from Pastor to Pastor.
3. Use and capacity of sanctuary. The capacity of the sanctuary is 190 – 150 for the sanctuary and 40 for the balcony. The rules for the use of the sanctuary will be revisited and updated.

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CO-MODERATORS' REPORTS – Barb & Rick: No report at this time.

SERVICE –Julie & Judy: On Dec. 21, members of the church served ice cream to those attending Shalom at the Methodist church next door. It was very well received. Those members who helped were Chuck, Ginger, Barb, Julie and Rev. Don. Darlene and Larry brought the ice cream.

WORSHIP – Barb & Darlene: Darlene thanked all those who helped put up and take down the Christmas decorations

FELLOWSHIP – Chuck: The Lunch Bunch Calendar for the year has been set. The first three months are set and is posted in the fellowship hall. January is Doubleday's, February is Rivertown and March is Shooter's.

PROPERTY – Rick & Larry: The Chapel needs some work completed so that it can be used for church services. The walls need repair and painted and new carpeting needs to be laid. Larry will get estimates for the repairs.

BUDGET & FINANCE – Bryan: The markets and mutual funds are up.

NEXT MEETING: February 9, 2020

NEXT MONTH OPENING PRAYER: Chuck

Attendance: December 2019 – 155 (31/5 week average)

December 2018 - 181 (36/5 week average)

Respectfully submitted by
Judith S Brewer,
Church Council Secretary

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Jesus didn't simply go through the motions during his Baptism. It was a very meaningful experience for Jesus. His Baptism represented Jesus' acceptance of his calling, his ministry, his appearance to the wider public as Son of God. It was a moment where there was no turning back, the point of no return.

Conversion means "turning toward" something. Well, Jesus with his Baptism, where he experienced the anointing of the Spirit, a mystical experience that marked his life, turns toward his mission in the world, his ministry to the world, his message of love for the world. It was a turn to the work at hand, the work of the Father. It was a turn where there was no turning back.

What about our own epiphanies? What about our own insights into the truth of Love, changing our hearts and minds? What about our own conversions, our own deep experiences of God, our own heart-turning toward God?

We often dismiss the reality of conversion, of heart-transformation, of turning toward God, of a heart-decision to truly see Jesus and truly internalize his life and teaching and follow the Way of Love he taught and lived and died for. We also dismiss the reality of experiencing God as we sit and commune with him in prayer and sense the indwelling of the Spirit.

I hope as Epiphany transitions into the sacred season of Lent, you take some quiet time during your days to reflect on all it means to love God and love neighbor which in essence defines the Christian life.

Cheers.....Pastor Don



Ash Wednesday

We begin Lent on February 26 with an Ash Wednesday service in the chapel at 7 PM. As we receive our ashes, a symbolism of our own mortality, we embark on a season of contemplation. For forty days (and the Sundays along the way) we will reflect on ourselves, what we seek and how we might better draw closer to God. This service is brief but meaningful. I hope you will join us.



*In
Loving
Memory
of*

On Saturday, January 18 we layed to rest our dear friend Mary Hunt. She will be missed by the St. Paul's Community.

Thank you to all who came out the weekend of the 29th to take down the Christmas decorations! It's a big job and takes lots of hands. We appreciate everyone's help!



St. Paul's Special Offering for February

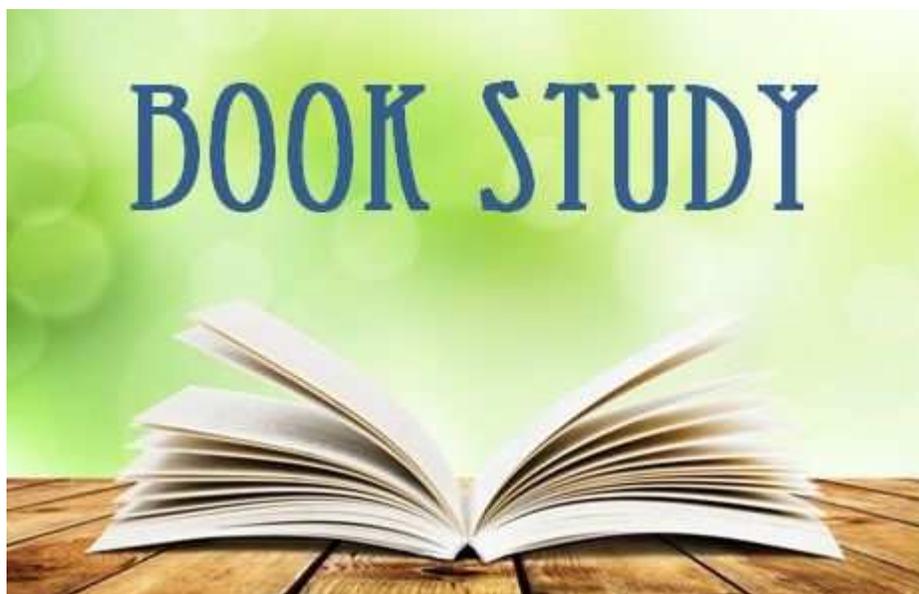


Hope House Mission

For years, Hope House Mission has dreamed of creating new facilities where we could have a greater impact on the homeless and hurting. Our Main Street Men's Shelter lacks the space and amenities we need. This long-term vision is beginning to take shape and we're excited to announce plans for a new location in Middletown.

- February 23 Rivertown Brewery
- March 29 Shooters Sports Grill
- April 26 Gracies Brunch

The building at 1001 Grove Street has been empty for years and offers a convenient location for a new men's mission to replace our current Main Street location. This move will allow us to serve more individuals and serve them better with new facilities designed to promote life transformation. Our new facility will have 50 Emergency Shelter beds, increasing our capacity to serve the community by 10 beds. In addition, we'll be increasing our permanent supportive housing rooms by 20. These rooms provide residents a home with structure, support and help to people we are serving in our emergency shelter.



Your giving statements are will be arriving this week. If you have any questions when they arrive please contact the office

We started a new book for our book discussion group. "***Christianity after Religion***". Diana Butler Bass is a renowned writer on American religion and the church. Yes, the title is provocative. But it is a wonderful book that delves into what to do amid the age of the struggling church. Join us Tuesday, January 14th, 2 pm at Triple Moon Coffee Company

Answer for puzzle is on page 6

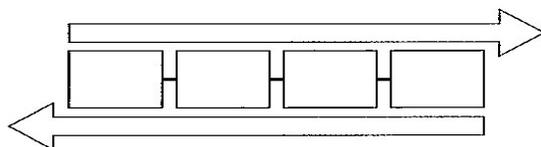
Smart Trams

ANALYSIS

LOGIC

Place a letter into each box to spell one word forward and another backward.

Biblical name of the father of Bela, meaning "strong one."



Biblical name of a son of Jonathan, meaning "belonging to all."

February Volunteer Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Refreshments</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Open</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>
2nd	C. Clark C. Kinyalocts	C. Burnett	L. & D. Adams C. Lowman	C. Clark	P. Beatty
Communion — M. & J Ratliff (Altar)					
9th	A. Turner J. Rockwell	C. Clark	C & J Batliner R. Lyons	C. Clark	C. Burnett
16th	C & J Batliner	C. Kinyalocts	T & M Shibley	C. Clark	M. Ratliff
23rd	L & D Adams	J. Batliner	C. Clark C. Kinyalocts	C. Clark	J. Ratliff



EMERGENCY

Pastoral Assistance



Virginia Elam Lorraine Clark
Cleo Habig Amanda Lorig
Carroll Stein Charlene Hale
Frances Stoutenborough Shirley Fore
Kathryn(O'Conner) Kuhn
Prayers for our service men and women..
Chase McConnehea Jake Burley

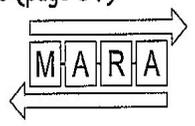
Pastoral Emergency

At St. Paul's UCC, we know that spiritual needs don't always neatly fit into Sunday morning or during business hours.

If you feel that you need to speak to the Pastor right away, before business hours please call **513-320-7441**. Listen to the automated voicemail that will give you instructions of how to leave a message. The **Pastor** will be contacted and will be in touch with you as soon as possible.



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February 2020

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

						1
2 10:15 Intergenerational Worship	3	4 Book Study 2 pm*	5 Choir 4:30 pm	6	7	8
19 10:15 Worship Council 11:30 am	10	11 Book Study 2 pm*	12 Choir 4:30 pm	13	14 Happy Valentines Day 	15
16 10:15 Worship	17	18 Book Study 2 pm*	19 Choir 4:30 pm	20	21	22
23 10:15 Worship Lunch Bunch Rivertown Brewery	24	25 Book Study 2 pm*	26 Ash Wednesday Service 7pm	27	28	29 

* Bible studies are held at Triple Moon Coffee shop 1100 Central Avenue, Middletown
*Reminder that children's Sunday school is held during worship on the
 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month in the fellowship hall*

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. Don Erickson, Interim Pastor
Marsha Minge, Choir Director • Barbara Flory, Pianist

Pastors Office Hours Tuesday-Wednesday 9:30-1:30pm Thursday by appointment
Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 11 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Office 513-422-4519 **E Mail:** stpaulsuccmidd@att.net
WEB PAGE: stpaulsuccmidd.org

