

Rooted in the past,
Living faithfully in the present

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

**MARCH
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

Did you know that Easter is also the season of Baptism? In the early church, Easter service was one that incorporated baptisms for new Christ-followers. So, when you went to Easter Sunday service, you'd expect that a number of baptisms would take place in the service.

Our modern practice of Lent derives from the process leading up to Easter baptisms. For those about to be baptized, spiritual preparation was involved. Fasting, learning, contemplating the way of Jesus was part of the journey. Preparing the heart so it was ready for the dying to self and the rising to God that both baptism and Easter represents – it was a necessary practice.

Thinking about the historical ties between Baptism and Easter and the process of Lent, I ponder my own baptism.

I was 17 years old when I was first baptized. Just before I entered high school, my family moved 17 miles across the Hudson River from the small city of Hudson, New York to an almost invisible town at the foothills of the Catskills, a town called Earlton. Shortly thereafter, we began attending a new church, Grapeville Baptist Church in Climax, New York, a just as tiny village 3 miles from Earlton. Our pastor was new to Grapeville and relatively new to the world, fresh out of Bible college and eager about his calling. His name was Stephen Etner and he took me under his wing.

In my junior year, as I was sending my application for admission off to Cedarville College, I began seriously contemplating Baptism. I had intuited that Baptism was a serious and big step and that up to this time I was not ready. I took the decision very earnestly.

But there was something else, something holding me back: I didn't know how to swim, being paralyzed by a fear of not touching bottom when in water.

My fear came from an experience in elementary school. I was a fourth grader when for PE, that is, Physical Education, we were brought to the high school's swimming pool. The first day of swimming, the teacher asked everyone who knew how to swim to jump in the pool and take a lap so he could gauge our swimming levels. For some reason, I believed I knew how to swim. I guess I equated holding my breath for more than minute in bathtub water as being a kind of swimming. So I jumped in the water. Fortunately, I was smart enough to know that it might be good to be next to the wall, just in case I was wrong. Well, I was wrong. I began like Jesus walking on water but soon became like Peter and began to sink. Drinking in too much chlorinated water, I flailed a bit grabbing for the wall. Eventually I got a hold and pulled myself up as I coughed out water. I realized in nearly drowning that, in fact, I did not know how to swim. The experience is funny now but it instilled in me a fear of not touching bottom that has stayed with me ever since.

To be baptized would mean in a sense giving my self, with my fear, away, if only for those few moments. It would mean conquering my fear, a fear of not being able to preserve myself by touching bottom. It would mean throwing off the life-preserver of fear away in those few instances when I would be dunked in water in a symbolic drowning. It would mean, using the words of scripture, emptying myself in order to be lifted up.

(Cont. on next page)

Working through my fear, I decided that I was ready, that I needed to do this. In the December of 1988, before a Sunday Night Service, I was baptized.

The baptismal tank was right underneath the church platform and pulpit. The floor board was opened and the tank filled with warm water. I, dressed in a white shirt and black pants as suggested, entered the tank and walked a few steps through the clear and now lukewarm water to Pastor. He began the service by introducing the meaning of Baptism, that it was an outward sign of an inward faith in Christ and of my being Born Again. Then Pastor asked me to give my testimony, how I came to be a Christian. I answered appropriately and the Baptism began. With a white handkerchief, Pastor covered my mouth and my nose and with the other hand held the back of my neck. He then dunked me back into the water so that my feet left the ground.

At this moment of symbolic drowning, of self being overwhelmed by the living water of Christ, I was afraid. But I trusted my pastor to lift me up. And when indeed I was lifted up in symbolic rebirth, I felt the moment after fear is assuaged, after the letting go of self leads to exaltation. I saw my fear of having no ground as groundless. In many ways, I was new again. I felt like a warm Easter morning, basking in the sun and joy of the day.

Cheers.....Pastor Don



As this is being written for the newsletter, the finishing touches are being added to St. Paul's profile. A lot of work has gone into creating the profile. It started before Pastor Sheresa left when we had the long paper in Friendship Hall for members to write comments. Then council, interim minister Don, and Ann in the office gathered and compiled information and statistics gathered from the questionnaires and past reports, making it a very thorough report. The profile will soon be sent to SONKA for their review before it will be posted, and the search committee's work will begin. Once we begin receiving UCC Ministerial Profiles, they will be confidentially review them and keep us all informed periodically.



Since we will be doing the Lenten study with First United Methodist Church we will not be doing our Tuesday book study.

Pastoral Emergencies

If you have a *Pastoral emergency* and have an immediate need please call *513-320-7441*.

If you would like a visit from Pastor Don either call the office to schedule a time or drop a note in the box in Friendship Hall.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children

*Children's Sunday school will take place during worship the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays of the month. They meet on the stage in the fellowship hall at 10:15 AM. The 1st Sunday of the month will be dedicated to intergenerational worship.

March Volunteer Schedule

| Date | Greeters/ Hospitality | Refreshments | Ushers | Liturgist | Open/Close |
|--|----------------------------|----------------|--|-----------|------------|
| 1st | R. Britton L. Britton | C. Burnett | L. Adams D. Adams C. Lowman | J. Brewer | M. Ratliff |
| Communion - C. Kinyalocets, C. Clark (R. Lyons) | | | | | |
| 8th | A. Turner J. Rockwell | C. Clark | C. Batliner J. Batliner R. Lyons | M. Minge | M. Ratliff |
| 15th | C. Batliner J. Batliner | C. Kinyalocets | T. Shibley M. Shibley J. Rockwell | C. Clark | M. Ratliff |
| 22nd | L. Adams D. Adams | J. Batliner | C. Clark C. Kinyalocets C. Burnett | D. Flory | M. Ratliff |
| 29th | J. Brewer R. Lyons | C. Burnett | D. Flory S. Green J. Green | P. Beatty | M. Ratliff |



Don't forget to reset
your clocks on
March 8 @ 2 am !
We spring forward!



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

*Virginia Elam Lorraine Clark Cleo Habig Amanda Lorig
Carroll Stein Charlene Hale Frances Stoutenborough Shirley
Fore Kathryn(O'Conner) Kuhn*

“For I will restore
Health to you
and heal you of your
wounds,” says the Lord.

-Jeremiah 30:17

*Prayers for our service
Men and women..
Chase McConnehea
ake Burley*



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

FEBRUARY 9, 2020

PRESENT: Barb Flory, Judy Brewer, Darlene Adams, Larry Adams, Bryan Canter, Rick Lyons, Chuck Clark, and Rev. Don Erickson. ABSENT: JULIE RATLIFF.

OPENING PRAYER: Chuck Clark

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from January 12, 2020. Approved. Rick/Chuck

APPROVAL OF AGENDA. Approved. Rick/Chuck

TREASURER'S REPORT. Filed for audit.

PASTOR'S REPORT - Rev. Don. His focus continues to be on Sunday services, pastoral care

Availability, a religious education offering, and regular office hours. During January, he

Averaged closer to 20 hours a week due to Mary Hunt's memorial as well as a couple

Requests for Benevolence funds. As for religious education, *Christianity After Religion* by DanaButler Bass will continue to be used. Instead of meeting weekly, Rev. Don will be posting a video Lesson based on the book and we will meet bi-weekly for discussion. Another religious education Offering that he has been doing the past several weeks is a "This Day in Religious History" blogpost. In the blog, He discusses things related to religion, the church, and spirituality on that calendar day. The seminarian preaching idea that was mentioned in the newsletter has already gained interest.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Chapel chairs, carpet, plaster. The chapel will be finished this week except for the chairs. After Viewing pictures of chairs, it was decided to get 40 chairs without arms from Church Plaza Companies, Sarasota, FL.. It was decided to get the carpet squares from Rainbow Carpet. The Total cost for the chairs and carpet will be under \$5,000.00. Motion to accept the carpet and the Chairs that council decided on. Motion passed. Larry/Bryan

2. Security discussion - concealed /carry permit form. Rev. Don will contact Carl Robinson of the UCC to find out the UCC's position on concealed carry.

3. Liability insurance. Bryan will check on this.

4. Ash Wednesday is scheduled for February 26 at 7:00 pm.

5. SHALOM. We are responsible for dinner on March 1st and breakfast on March 2nd. Judy & Julie Will take care of planning the menu and getting others to help serve.

6. Official Church Book It has not been updated in a very long time. It was decided to update the Book. Ann could enter the information in a word document, print it out and enter the pages into the Book.

7. Update from Ann. Ann would like to be informed if there is going to be workers in the building while She is here working so that Shem is not surprised. Also, see #6 above.

8. Defibrillator. It was decided that the church needs to have a unit. After looking at information on Different models, it was decided to purchase the automatic Zoll AED Plus Business Pkg.. A motion was made to purchase the package. Motion passed. Judy/Bryan

9. Sponsorship. Downtown Middletown Third Annual Pride Day - June 26. Motion made to give \$100.00. Motion passed. Rick/Chuck

OLD BUSINESS

1. Profile. The church profile is really close to being finished.

2. Council opening prayer for March-June. Previous sign-up sheet has been misplaced.

CO-MODERATORS' REPORTS - Barb & Rick. Thanks for everyone's input & Rev. Don's writing for the Profile.

SERVICE - Julie & Judy. See #5 above.

WORSHIP - Barb & Darlene. The music that Rev. Don plays before the service begins is well received.

FELLOWSHIP - Chuck. The list for workers and the Lunch Bunch schedule has been completed.

PROPERTY - Rick & Larry. See #1 under New Business

BUDGET & FINANCE - Bryan. The market is up. There is money available for building improvements.

NEXT MEETING: March 8, 2020

NEXT MONTH OPENING PRAYER: Rick

Attendance: January 2019 - 111 (28/4 week average)

January 2018 - 58 (14/4 week average). 2 Sundays were cancelled because of snow in 2018.

Respectfully submitted by
Judith S Brewer, Council Secretary



Easter Flower Order Sheet

Order due by 3/29



Chrysanthemums \$12.00

_____ @ \$12.00= _____

Azaleas

_____ @ \$18.00= _____

Circle appropriate choice

in memory of... in honor of..... To the glory of God

Name(s) _____

Lilies \$11.00

_____ @ \$11.00= _____

Circle appropriate choice

in memory of... in honor of..... To the glory of God

Name(s) _____

Total due at time of purchase \$ _____

Name of purchaser : _____

Please drop order sheet in the offering basket or call the office to place your order 513-422-4519

NEW LOOK

We are sprucing up the look of the chapel ! Stop in and see what has happened so far! We have fresh paint and new carpet which has brightened the space up. New chairs will be delivered in about a month.



For our Lenten study, we will be joining First United Methodist next door. Beginning on Thursday, March 5th at 6:00-7:30 pm, lasting for 5 weeks and finishing Thursday, April 2nd, Marilyn Clark, a retired professor at Xavier University, will teach a class on the Parables of Jesus. It should be a wonderful time of spiritual learning and ecumenical fellowship.

March 2020

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|--|------------------|--|----|----|
| 1 Worship 10:15 | 2 | 3 | 4 Choir 4:30 | 5 Lenten Study 6-7:30 pm 1st UMC | 6 | 7 |
| 8 Worship 10:15 | 9 | 10 | 11 Choir 4:30 | 12 Lenten Study 6-7:30 pm 1st UMC | 13 | 14 |
| 15 Worship 10:15 | 16 | 17 St. Patricks Day  | 18 Choir 4:30 | 19 Lenten Study 6-7:30 pm 1st UMC | 20 | 21 |
| 22 Worship 10:15 | 23 | 24 | 25 Choir 4:30 | 26 Lenten Study 6-7:30 pm 1st UMC | 27 | 28 |
| 29 Lunch Bunch Gracies Flower orders due! Worship 10:15 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

Special Offering for March is "Abilities' First"

Easter Flower order form is due March 29th!

*Lenten Study is at the First United Methodist Church
120 South Broad St. Middletown Ohio 45044*

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

Office Hours Tuesday, Wednesday, 9:30am-1:30pm Thursday By appointment
Church Office Hours Tuesday-Thursday 11am-2pm
Office 513-422-4519

E Mail: stpaulsuccmidd@att.net **WEB PAGE:** stpaulsuccmidd.org

