

# TIDINGS

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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Senior Pastor - Rev. Dr. Geoffrey G. Drutchas

Minister of Christian Education - Pastor Cheryl Schalm

December 2017

## **PASTOR'S PEACE**

The first week in December begins the season of Advent. Advent, which kicks off a new Christian year, actually means beginning. For our church and for congregations throughout the world it is a four-week season of devotional focus when we remember the darkness of the world before Christ illumines it with his light and love. Even more personally, it's also meant to be a time for taking a fearless moral inventory and deciding what we need to change in our daily lives for the year ahead that keeps us being the men and women we want to be in keeping with the example of Jesus.

To this end, an extra dose of honesty and humility are so important in the Advent season—honesty in identifying what is sinful about our life; humility to recognize that we need Jesus' help to overcome and break free of it. Both honesty and humility in our faith life with Christ enable us to make a fresh start with life, not being weighed down by our past.

In our church sanctuary on Sunday mornings, we will be marking each new week of Advent leading up to Christmas by lighting another candle. The four Advent candles lit represent the wonderful things that Christ makes possible for us as we set aside our sinfulness with his help—hope, peace, love, and joy. It all culminates on Christmas Eve when Advent ends and we light a fifth candle at the center of all the others symbolizing Christ's light truly shining through our lives.

I hope that each of us watching the Advent candles lit one-by-one will be reminded of the importance of taking those next steps in honesty and humility necessary to become the people that God always intended us to be so that Christ can shine through our words and actions in the coming year.

Unfortunately, in these days the spiritual opportunity that Advent offers can get lost in our anticipation of Christmas. Our wider culture prefers not to pay attention to Advent. In a world where so much narcissism prevails spiritual self-exams are not as popular anymore. Unlike Christmas, no one has yet found a way to commercialize and exploit Advent with its more somber and serious themes and concern for our spiritual life. But that's just one more reason to love Advent and to embrace it. I do. Will you.

Let's all take the opportunity which Advent presents and get spiritually to work so that we are ready to welcome Christ anew and let him shine through our lives.

*--Shalom, Pastor Geoff Drutchas*

## **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EDITORIAL**

Given the tragic events that have occurred over the past several weeks I thought the "reprint" of the following appropriate. Never has it been a better time to reflect upon the true meaning, the real reason for Christmas. Despite the heightened fear, anxiety and uncertainties that exist as a result of hatred and evil, let us never forget that Christ has overcome the world. Let us take the time to draw closer to Him this Christmas season in order that we might experience the best Christmas gift ever.

We often miss Advent's power because the weeks leading to Christmas are full of secular Christmas parties and preparations for Christmas. Each year, the busyness of this season serves to distract us from having an Advent season that truly prepares us for the celebration of Christmas, with all its meaning. It happens every year, as predictably as drawing up a shopping list, decorating the tree and planning the Christmas Dinner. Every year we think, "Now THIS is the year when I really will enter into Advent." And there it stays. Nothing happens. We know in our hearts that Advent can be more than a "pre-Christmas" season, more than those four weeks of getting ready for the Big Day on December 25th. We sit in Church and hear the different readings, the darkness and the promise of hope.

We ponder in our hearts: Our lives are full, our families are good, our homes beautiful. We have everything, simply everything we could want. But in the quiet darkness, we are aware of something stirring in our hearts, a longing we can't name. Something that no trip to the store, no decorations, Christmas dishes or new ornaments can fill. The longing might be risky, even dangerous, so we push it away — quickly — and busy ourselves again. There is so much to do in these weeks. The stirring returns.

What if this Advent, we allow ourselves to imagine a life that is different? What if our hearts were at peace and our lives more satisfying? What if we recognized that stirring in the most hidden corners of our hearts as something holy, a Holy Longing, a desire for a deeper relationship with God.

We might squirm at that and stammer all of the excuses we know: "Not now. I'm really busy. I'm not a very holy person. I'm going to get to a serious relationship with God as soon as my kids are gone... when I don't have to care for my parents; when I get the promotion at work; when we move to a new house." There are dozens of ways we can evade the issue, but still, that longing is there for something more.

Advent is a time to recognize both our holy longing and the healing love God has for us, despite the many barriers we put up between ourselves and God. We can start simply and just rest at the edge of our beds in the mornings, open our hands and whisper, "Come, Lord Jesus!" God waits with infinite love and with arms outstretched to

meet us. The words we say don't matter. We can speak as if God is a friend we have not seen in a long time, but one with whom we can sit in a comfortable silence.

It's just about taking the first step. Even if we are fearful about this next step, we can say to God what is in our hearts. In this Advent season, it's time to risk, to make the first step, to find our way back home. After all, All Hearts Go Home for the Holidays.

May your heart find peace and rest.

***In Christ, Pastor Cheryl Schalm, Minister of Christian Education***

## **Christian Education Plans for Upcoming Events**

### **ST. PAUL UCC GENEROSITY SHARED WITH CHILDREN AROUND THE WORLD...**

On Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, a total of 117 gift-filled shoe boxes, donated by members of our congregation and Choir Director Tracy Hoffman's chorus choir, were delivered to the Operation Christmas Child Dearborn collection center. This number represents a ¼ increase over the boxes donated last year. The boxes will be loaded onto semi-trucks for delivery to the Boone, NC distribution center. From Boone, the boxes will be shipped around the world to children in need and serve as a means to introduce them to Christ.

Thank you to all who so kindly and generously gave to support this outreach.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL HAT & GLOVE DRIVE CONTINUES...** The Sunday School children will continue to collect hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks and undergarments for children and families in need throughout the month of December. All items can be dropped off upstairs and/or placed in the gigantic stocking located at the bottom of the stairs. All items will be donated to the Salvation Army. If you have any questions please contact Pastor Schalm.

**"AM I HAPPY?" 2017 YOUTH RETREAT...** A group of 19 young people and chaperones attended the annual youth retreat held at Michindoh Conference Center and Camp the weekend of November 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. Over the course of the weekend youth participated in three worship services & workshops, enjoyed numerous games of basketball & group games, performed and/or watched a talent show, sipped hot chocolate upon a hayride, went on a nature walk and had an over-all great time.

In addition to these activities the youth also had the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of God's promises and how He works all things for the good, regardless of how bad they may appear at the onset. They came to understand that God's ideal of happiness often conflicts with the world's ideal of happiness.

The youth would like to thank Men's Fellowship for sponsoring the youth retreat and all the chaperones who gave a weekend of their time to chaperone. Without your generosity and kindness this event would not be possible. Thank You and God Bless you all!

## **CALLING ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS AND RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES.**

Christian Education is in need of pictures and addresses of all St. Paul UCC college students and High School graduates enrolled in continuing education programs (trade school, skill programs, apprenticeships, etc.). Please forward addresses and pictures to Pastor Schalm or to the church office.

Pictures will be displayed on the "College Connection" board and students will be added to the quarterly "College Connection" mailing list.

## **\*Thirsty Thursday's Young Adult Bible Study & Fellowship**

***Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. - John 6:35***

Whether you have been a regular or are considering coming for the first time, we welcome and look forward to your company and participation.

### **"Thirsty Thursdays"**

**The What:** Young Adult Bible Study

**The Why:** Rehydration: Daily living and life can be dehydrating!

**The Where:** The Schalm's. 26868 Winslow Drive. Flat Rock

**The When:** Thursday evenings

**The Time:** 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m

## **\*Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship fourth quarter activities include:**

***Soup Kitchen Christmas Party***, members of Rock Hard in Faith will once again be hosting the cookie decorating station for the Wyandotte UCC soup kitchen Christmas party held on **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**. Youth should plan to arrive at St. Paul UCC by 11:00 a.m. Please make sure to sign the sheet located on the youth board if you plan to attend.

***Youth Cookie Walk***, the youth cookie walk will be held following the Christmas Pageant that will take place during the **10:30 a.m. worship service on December 17<sup>th</sup>**. Youth are asked to bake their favorite Christmas cookies and to bring them in where they will be displayed along with numerous others and sold. This is one of our major youth fundraisers!

***Youth and Family Christmas Potluck and Gift Exchange***, this year's party will be held Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>, in the upstairs Senior High and Sunday School classrooms. All youth and families are invited to bring a dish to pass and youth are encouraged to bring a gift to exchange. We will eat at 11:30 a.m. followed by the gift exchange. Then, at 12:30 p.m. we will head to the Westroom for a special presentation offered by Karen DePriest on Christy's Legacy of Hope. Please sign the sheet located on the youth board or inform Pastor Schalm of number of family members attending. The more the merrier!

**Wyandotte Soup Kitchen** will be hosted by Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship on Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>. All participants should plan to meet at the church at 10:30 a.m. for transportation to the First Congregational Church. We will return back to St. Paul around 2:00 p.m.

**Winter Break Bash. Family Fun Night**, this much loved event is hosted by Rock Hard in Faith and will be held on **January 5<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.** throughout the church. Youth should plan to arrive by 5:30 p.m. to help set-up. Full details are listed under events you won't want to miss.

## **\*Young Married Ministry Upcoming Events**

**Lights Before Christmas Toledo Zoo Walk.....** join us for a festive night at the Toledo Zoo on Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. Participants are welcome to meet at the church at 5:00 p.m. to car-pool or to meet at the zoo with their families if preferred. Tickets are \$16.00.

**Escape The Post ....** Couples are invited to join together to escape one of six themed escape rooms at the all-new, Escape The Post game room located in Flat Rock. These are private games and only those in our group will be participating. Do you have the mind to escape in time? Date: Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup>

Cost: \$25.00 P.P. Secure your participation by contacting Pastor Schalm by December 17<sup>th</sup>.

**The December spotlight** shines brightly upon the Dykowski family: John (dad), Heather (mom), Drew, Hayley and Drake. This wonderful family is the owner of a dog named, Champ. Some favored activities of the family include swimming, bike riding, and camping. Their most favored traditions include family holidays and birthdays.

The Dykowski family has enjoyed trips to Cedar Point, Camping and NASCAR races. Their favored family values are that of kindness, honesty and helping others. Please take the time to introduce yourself to this wonderful family!

## **EVENTS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS**

### **First Advent Service Celebrated with Pew Communion—Wear Blue!**

Our congregation will be celebrating the start of a new Christian year with the Advent Service and pew communion on Sunday, December 3, 9 and 10:30 a.m. The change of seasons will be marked by a performance of the handbell choir and the change of lectern and pulpit paraments to blue—the official color of the new season. All church members are invited to join in the spirit of the occasion by wearing something blue as well.

Our congregation practices an open communion. Church membership is not required to partake of the Lord's Supper with us. What is asked is that those sharing in communion be of adult age or a confirmed youth, seeking to walk more closely with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

### **'Blue Christmas' Service Remembers Loved Ones**

Church members and friends who have lost loved ones over the past year or more and are experiencing Christmas the first or second time without a loved one are invited to attend a special "Blue Christmas" program and worship service on Thursday, December 7, 7 p.m. We will initially gather in the church parlor and then join for a time of very special worship in the chancel of the St. Paul sanctuary.

Participants are encouraged to bring a photo of their loved one with them that night to place on the altar. The "Blue Christmas" Service will be led by Pastor Geoff Drutchas. For more information, contact the church office (313-291-1221)

### **Santa's Magic Forest Needs Volunteers for St. Paul Day**

It's going to be "St. Paul Day" at Santa's Magic Forest in Taylor Heritage Park on Saturday, December 9, 12-7 p.m. and volunteers from our church are needed to welcome visitors to the Downriver's finest holiday display. In lending a hand, our volunteers will also be helping raise funds for the Fish & Loaves Food Pantry which is Michigan's largest food pantry.

Santa's Magic Forest will open its doors this year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, November 25 at 3 p.m., just in time to welcome Santa at the head of city-wide parade through Heritage Park at 4 p.m.

The 'Magic Forest' holiday display, which includes two dozen charming Christmas scenes with moving animatrons, will continue to welcome visitors through at least Sunday, December 17. Children have an opportunity to visit Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Magic Forest. It's a beautiful time for kids, parents, and volunteers.

There is a small \$3 admission charge (cash only) to the Magic Forest which directly benefits the Fish & Loaves Pantry in its ongoing mission, providing food assistance to thousands of Downriver families throughout the year. Photos with Santa are also available at \$8.

All volunteer stints for St. Paul Day at the Magic Forest are two hours. To volunteer, complete a Make-A-Wish card on Sunday mornings and add it to the offering plate, or contact the church office (313-291-1221).

### **Taylor Community Chorus Hosts Annual Christmas Concert**

The Taylor Community Chorus will be hosting its annual Christmas concert on Sunday, December 10, 4 p.m., at the William D. Ford Senior Center, 6750 Troy Street, Taylor. The theme for this year's concert: "One Small Child This Christmas Night."

The Taylor Community Chorus is directed by St. Paul Music Director Tracy Hoffman, who has succeeded Mark Ennis in that leadership post. Many St. Paul members participate in the Taylor Community Chorus making its twice-yearly concerts a "family affair" for our congregation.

Tickets can be obtained from Chorus members or at the door—an \$8 donation is asked.

**CALLING ALL CHRISTMAS ANGELS...** Christian Education is pleased to give all interested members the opportunity to be an "Angel" to a child in need this holiday season. The Angel Tree, adorned with angel ornaments identifying the gender and age of a child in need is located in the Fellowship Hall. Anyone interested in purchasing a gift for a child in need this holiday season should simply pull an ornament, log the

number on the sheet located on the table, and return the gift unwrapped with the ornament taped to it by December 10<sup>th</sup>. All donated gifts will be delivered to the Salvation Army on Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. If you have any questions regarding this outreach please contact Pastor Cheryl Schalm.

**Sunday School Children to Present "A Candy Cane Christmas."** "A Candy Cane Christmas," the "2017" Sunday School Christmas pageant will be held on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall as part of the 10:30 a.m. worship service. All church members are encouraged to attend and to remain afterwards for lunch hosted by Christian Education. In addition, parents should plan to bring their cameras and children their wish list as we anticipate a special visit from Santa.

Parents, please mark your planners as a special dress and all cast rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. – noon. All cast members should refer to their rehearsal schedules for additional rehearsal dates.

### **Calling all Bakers – Cookie Donations Sought for Annual Youth Cookie Walk.**

Members of Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship are once again seeking cookie donations for their annual cookie walk to be held on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> following the Christmas Pageant. The past cookie walks have been a great success due to the variety of cookies baked and donated by members of the congregation. The youth are grateful and thank all those who have contributed in the past. With your continued support, we look forward to another delightful and sweet Cookie Walk.

As has been tradition, in order to prevent chaos created from serving lunch and running the cookie walk simultaneously, the cookie walk will be conducted after lunch has been served. However, if you do not plan to stay for the luncheon, special arrangements can be made to purchase cookies following the conclusion of the Christmas Pageant. Please contact Pastor Schalm to make these arrangements prior to December 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Caregivers Plan Pre-Christmas Meeting**

The St. Paul Caregivers Group will once again be meeting on the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. The next gathering is scheduled for Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. Every session starts with a quick-read article on a caregiving topic before we turn to conversation and discussion. Caregiving tips will be shared by participants who offer mutual support on a confidential basis. Pastor Geoff Drutchas leads the sessions, assisted by Parish Nurse Kathy Williams. The group is open to all St. Paul church members and friends.

**Sewing Guild -- Sew 'n Sews --** Please join us for a little sewing and a lot of fellowship at our next meeting on Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Bring a sandwich for lunch, dessert and coffee is provided. P/S: No sewing skill required!

### **Nativity Story Told through Festival of Lessons & Carols**

St. Paul Church members and friends are invited to join in the great carols of the season as our congregation gathers on Christmas Eve morning, December 24, 10 a.m., to share in a re-telling of births of both John the Baptist and Jesus, which revealed God's new plan for humankind. Plan on lots of joyous singing as we also listen to the word of the gospel according to both Matthew and Luke which share the most details about the early lives of both John and Jesus.

Readers are needed to assist with the Festival of Lessons & Carols service. To volunteer please contact the church office (313-291-1221) or speak with Pastor Geoff Drutchas

### **'Coming Home' Christmas Eve Services Celebrated**

St. Paul Church members and friends are invited to "Come Home" as we gather together to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in our historic church setting and a sanctuary decorated with the beautiful lights and greens of Christmas, plus fresh poinsettias banked around our "Angel Tree." Candlelight services will be held at 7 and 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve at St. Paul United Church of Christ.

Pastors Geoffrey Drutchas and Cheryl Schalm will lead worship that sacred night. As the Advent candles are reignited and a Christ Candle is lit to the accompaniment of choral affirmations, the story of Jesus' birth will be retold. In addition to music provided by our church's Noel Ensemble (7 p.m.) and the Chancel Choir (11 p.m.), guest soloist Summer Herkimer will be performing 'Alleluiah' at the early service. The congregation will also join in a medley of Christmas carols. Pastor Geoff Drutchas will be preaching a sermon that special night, entitled "Coming Home to Christ." Worship at both services will culminate in the sacrament of Holy Communion and the congregational singing of both "Silent Night" and the Lord's Prayer in candlelight.

Our St. Paul congregation observes an "open communion." Unlike more restrictive churches, all guests and visitors are invited to partake of the Lord's Supper without regard to church membership, provided they are of adult age or, if younger, already confirmed and able to receive communion in their home church. You are encouraged to invite family and friends to share Christmas Eve worship with us.

Although no children care attendant will be on hand that night, families are encouraged as needed to make use of the convenient and accessible Family Room off the narthex. The room offers a video screen in which parents can follow the service until they return to the sanctuary. The adjoining lavatory has a changing table. Christmas packets for children, including crayons and coloring books, can be picked up in the narthex prior to the start of services. Also, battery-lit candles are available for young people under the age of ten for the candle-lighting time during the singing of "Silent Night." Please let an usher know if you have any additional need.

**YOUTH PREPARE TO HOST "WINTER BREAK BASH," FAMILY FUN NIGHT...** On Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup> members of Rock Hard in Faith Youth Fellowship will be hosting their annual Family Fun Night. This free and fun family event will be held from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. and is open to all church members, family and friends. In addition to music and two indoor moonwalks, a coffee café featuring minimally priced flavored coffees, hot chocolate, pizza, nachos and other goodies will be set-up in the Westroom. Families will also have the opportunity to make winter crafts, s'mores, candy, picture frames and to decorate hats and cookies. This night is packed with so much fun that you will not want to miss it.

This event will replace the Holiday Family Fun night. We hope to see you there!

## **Annual Congregational Meeting Scheduled**

The annual meeting of the St. Paul congregation will be held on Sunday, January 14, 2018. In addition to reviewing reports on our ministry and programs over the past year, the congregation will be voting on a new budget and a slate of nominees for Council leadership. The proposed 2018 budget will be sent to all church members in mid-December accompanied by a letter from the President-elect Diane Poet.

The annual meeting will follow a single service of worship that morning beginning at 10 a.m. Church members should sign in at the narthex and pick up a copy of their annual report.

To prepare for the annual meeting all church organizations should complete reports and submit them no later than December 28, 2017.

## **Tickets Available for Euchre Night**

Looking for an evening of fun, excitement and fellowship, then look no more. The St. Paul Men's Fellowship is hosting its third annual St. Paul Euchre Night on Saturday, February 20, 2018 from 6:00 – 10:00 pm at the church. Doors open at 5:30 pm. The cost is \$10 per person if you buy your tickets in advance or \$12 per person at the door. We play progressive euchre, so no partner is required, you can come by yourself. There will be cash prizes for first, second and third place and a 50/50 raffle. The evening includes a dinner snack of pizza, salad, dessert and beverage. There will also be pretzels and popcorn to snack on throughout the evening. Tickets can be purchased at the KIOSK table during Coffee Hour on Sunday mornings throughout the month of December and January or by calling the Church office at 313-291-1221.

## **Souperbowl Sunday Coming: Soups Needed**

The fifth annual "Souperbowl Sunday" will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018, in Fellowship Hall, 11:30 am -1:00 pm. Church members and friends will have the opportunity to enjoy a wide array of 20-25 different home-made soups along with crackers and condiments. Donations for the event are \$7 per person at the door or you can purchase tickets in advance at the KIOSK table during Fellowship Hour or by calling the Church office at 313-291-1221. Those participating receive a carrier or tray to take with them to the many soup stations as they sample the full variety offered. The event is being organized by the Building and Grounds Ministry. All proceeds will benefit improvements to our church facilities.

Church members are invited to contribute their culinary talents to the occasion by preparing a soup to be featured. Those interested in hosting a soup station are asked to speak with event coordinator Jim Poet (734-718-3137). Mark your calendars now for the last Sunday in January so that you don't miss out on a fun and tasty afternoon.

**Annual Scrapbook Crop** is Sat. Feb. 3, from 9 AM- 7 PM. The cost is \$40. This includes your cropping space, three meals, as well as snacks and beverages all day. There will be vendors, make and takes, demos, and raffles. Even if you do not want to scrapbook, there will be something for everyone as you shop with our vendors. If you are a vendor, or know of a vendor, and they might be interested, please let me know. We will be needing raffle and door prizes, as well as people to help that day. This is a big fundraiser for BOF and the Christian Education Ministries. Please contact Debbie Case at 734-941-1228 or email [debbiescase@aol.com](mailto:debbiescase@aol.com) if you want more information.

## **Tickets Now on Sale for the 2018 Wild Game Dinner**

The eleventh annual St. Paul Wild Game Dinner will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2018. Tickets, which are \$30 per person, may be purchased at the KIOSK table in Fellowship Hall between Sunday morning services, by contacting the church office at 313-291-1221 during the week or by contacting James Poet, Gary Staffeld, Candace Poet, John Smith or Dan Case. The dinner is usually an early sell-out, patrons are encouraged to purchase their ticket early.

The doors open on the night of the event at 5:30 pm, hors d'oeuvres are served at 6:00 pm with dinner at 7 p.m. Hors d'oeuvre items for the night will include wild chicken chili, turtle soup, salmon dip, sausage, cheese and crackers and fresh fruit. Entree items will include venison meatballs, Mexican venison lasagna, buffalo-carved, buffalo stir fry, BBQ wild boar, wild boar sausage w/green pepper and onions, along with potatoes and gravy and of course dessert, all served in our own Fellowship Hall decorated like a large hunting lodge.

Adding to the excitement of the night, there will be ten unique and exciting raffles. This year will again feature the auctioning of a genuine Raccoon Hat. The St. Paul Building and Grounds Ministry, which sponsors the dinner, invites donations of wild game (e.g., Venison, Salmon, Rabbit, etc.) from church members. Prize items for raffle are also needed and welcomed. To donate or volunteer for the dinner, please contact coordinating team members Jim Poet, Gary Staffeld, Candace Poet, John Smith or Dan Case. The dinner is a fun filled event for all ages. Please visit our church website at [www.stpaulucctaylor.org](http://www.stpaulucctaylor.org) to see pictures of past events.

## **Red Hot Purple Angels**

**December 5, Tuesday**– is our Christmas dinner party at SAVANNAH'S at 2156 W Jefferson in Trenton. The cost for dinner is \$28. The menu choices will be posted on the RHPA Bulletin Board by Nov 7. The sign-up sheet is there now. Sally Sigman is the contact for this event. Please pay Sally by November 16. If you want to carpool from church, let Sally know. Carpooling will leave church at 6 PM sharp. We will meet at Savannah's at 6:30 PM; dinner is at 7 PM. Bring a gift if you have a secret pal. This time sign your name so that your secret pal finally knows who you are. If you do not have a secret pal, please bring a wrapped gift (\$10-\$15) to exchange. You do not have to have a secret pal to participate in the celebration. If you are unable to attend, but want a secret pal for next year, let Sally know or you will not be included for 2018.

Our **January** planning meeting will be on Thursday, the 25th at 7 PM in the Parlor. Please come with ideas for next year's outings/meetings or give them to Kathy Williams prior to that day.

## **HEALTH MINISTRIES**

**Exercise Classes** – Improvement in dexterity, balance and strength have been noticeable by those doing the exercise class at church on Mondays & Wednesday at 2 PM. No classes in December. Watch the MorningTide for starting again in Jan. All are welcome to participate.

**Blood Drive** – On Thursday, January 25, from 1-6:45 PM, we will hold our next blood drive. Please mark your calendar for this date. There needs to be 59 days between donations. Please make an appointment by contacting Parish Nurse, Kathy Williams, or complete a Make-a-Wish card and place it in the offering plate. There needs to be 59 days between donations. Please make an appointment by contacting Parish Nurse, Kathy Williams, or complete a Make-a-Wish card and place it in the offering plate. Kathy has had some time slots put aside for members of our church. You can now make appointments for/at your own convenience through the Internet. Visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) click on the blue box on the left side of the page that says 'Enter a Sponsor Code', under 'Find a blood drive near you.' Type in StPaulTaylor (no spaces). You will then be directed to the next page listing our blood drive. Click on the last column to sign up. You will need to register & obtain a password. IDs & passwords are case sensitive. You can also download to your phone or print out a Rapid Pass the day of the drive prior to coming to the drive. You can read the educational materials & complete the health history online to save some time at the blood drive. If you have questions about eligibility you can look at eligibility requirements on [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) or contact the Red Cross blood donation center at 866-236-3276. There is updated information about a four week deferral for those who have been to areas where the Zika virus has been found.

**Matter of Balance** – Class was successful. Let Kathy know if you are interested in taking a future class.

**Health/Medical supplies** –If you have or need medical supplies, such as walkers, wheelchairs, please contact our parish nurse or the office.

***"Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live."*** John 11:25

## **BIRTHDAY'S AND ANNIVERSARIES**

### **December St. Paul Member and Friend Anniversaries:**

Happy Anniversary to the following couples: Jack and Sandy Burchard (60 years), James and Cheryl Schalm (29 years), Aaron Johnson and Rebecca Markey (27 years), Sarah and Brydon Stull (17 years), Charmaine and Erik Wright (15 years), Kyle and Mary Hard (13 years), Jeffrey and Lisa MacZink (5 years) and Amanda and Kyle Bokor (4 years).

### **December St. Paul Member and Friend Birthdays:**

Happy Birthday to the following members and friends: Ilene Krogman (101 years), Edna Badarak, Glen Koths, Miles Church Jr., Daniel Galeski, Susan Spears, Donna Terry, Cleora Pattenaude, Jeanne Edwards, Richard Gish, Rodney Gish, John Bullock, Dan Childress, Craig Rensel, Brent Kuhn, James Moore, Lisa Childress, John King, Rebecca Markey, Michael Gorbe, Kyle Hard, Marion Salo, Spencer Warren, Brydon Stull, Arthur Apiyo, Erica McCleary, Moses Flomo, Tyler Gillespey, Morgan Schalm, Rachel Durisin, Kayleen Knofske, Abbigail Balaka, John Martin, Benjamin Kittendorf, Kaylee Ostrowski, Hannah Johnson and Jordyn Miller.

### **December St. Paul Youth Birthdays:**

Happy Birthday to the following youth: Christine Martinez, Luke Frazier, Madeline Martinez, Justin Vignola, Ethan Hard, Kyler Ostrowski, Drake Ostrowski, Mason McCleary, Alivia Bokor, Brennen Wlasuk.

We apologize if we missed your Anniversary or Birthday, but it's because our records don't include all your personal information, please feel free to contact the Church office at 313-291-1221 and we will gladly update your personal information for you.

## **GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **'CHRISTMAS FUND' The UCC Pension Board's Ministerial Assistance Program For Retired UCC Clergy/Lay Persons 'OFFERING RECEIVED ANY SUNDAY IN DECEMBER'**

The theme for the 2017 Christmas Fund Offering is "Shepherding The Light". For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross – one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ – has been a way in which we, as members of the United Church of Christ, reflect the light of Jesus Christ in the lives of the many women and men who have so faithfully and selflessly served, and who now find themselves facing unforeseen financial crises.

One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that the funds provide direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees. The funds do not support programs or institutions, but people. Christmas "Thank You" gift checks were provided to over 500 retired clergy and lay employees. With your continued generosity, more individuals will receive the support of the church in their time of need.

Think of the ways your life has been touched by a former clergy or lay person, and how important those experiences were for you. Your contributions do make a difference in the lives of many!

You will find a red offering envelope included in this Tidings and also in the Sanctuary pews. Please contribute prayerfully and generously to your ability... to those who have served God so faithfully. This Christmas Fund Offering will be received any Sunday in December. On behalf of the Stewardship of St. Paul ... God Bless you, Merry Christmas, and Thank you.

### **Single Service Schedule Begins Christmas Eve Morning**

During the Christmas and New Year's holidays St. Paul Church will follow a **single** service schedule for four weeks, **beginning Sunday, December 24** and continuing through **Sunday, January 14**. All single services will be held at 10 a.m. Our double service schedule at 9 and 10:30 a.m. will resume, Sunday, January 21.

To check on the Sunday morning service schedule, you may always call the church office (313-291-1221).

## **Poinsettias Honor and Commemorate Family and Friends**

In keeping with custom our sanctuary 'Angel Tree' will be banked with fresh poinsettias honoring and commemorating loved one and friends. You can purchase a poinsettia to include in the Christmas Eve floral array. The names of those whom you wish to honor or remember will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

To reserve a poinsettia, simply use one of the white envelope pews, include your \$8 contribution, mark the envelope "Poinsettias," and indicate whom you would like to commemorate. The envelope can be added to the Sunday morning offering plate or returned to the church office. All poinsettias request need to be received no later than Monday morning, December 17.

## **Remember 'Simple Gifts' this Advent and Christmas Season**

In recent weeks members of our church council have been wearing yellow "Simple Gift" buttons on their lapels—a reminder to us all about the importance of closing our church's budget gap before year end in order to ensure that we can continue to do the ministry together so important for us all. In this season when we remember God's gift of salvation revealed in the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem and celebrate as well the gifts that the Wise Men presented to him at the manger, may we each be as generous as we are able in supporting our church and ministry with our gifts as one more expression of our devotion to Christ and everything we share as part of the living body of Christ.

## **Candidates Sought for Church Council**

Nominations are invited for several St. Paul Church Council positions as our congregation looks to its annual meeting and election on January 14, 2018. Council positions open for nomination include second vice president, secretary, elder, deacon, and trustee. All positions are for three year terms. The nominee elected for second vice president thereafter serves as first vice president during the second year and as Council president during a third and final year of office. All Council members attend monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of every month. Any church member interested in being nominated should contact the church office or speak with Church's current trustees Dave Badarak, John Smith, or Michael Isaacs.

**Children's Choir** gathers in the West Room after the 10:30 a.m. worship service to practice our songs. All children up to and including the 6th grade are invited to join. All interested children should gather in the West Room at 11:30 a.m. If you would like more information please contact children's choir director, Sally Sigman. Looking forward to seeing you in children's choir!

## **Volunteer needed for St. Paul Sign Board**

The Building and Grounds Ministry is looking for a volunteer or volunteers to maintain our large St. Paul advertising sign, located to the West of the Church on Goddard Road. Responsibilities would be to update the sign as events are happening at St. Paul (ie: Fish Dinners, Rummage Sale, Blood Drives, etc), training will be provided. Anyone interested in volunteering to take over the responsibility for updating the advertising sign should see either Michael Isaacs, John Smith or David Badarak, our St. Paul Trustees.

**Coffee Hour Drink Spills have become a concern.** Please help us avoid drink spills. Lids are provided during Coffee Hour for your beverages if you would like to leave the Hall with your drink. We have noticed many areas in the building where beverages were spilled. We would like to keep our building looking as nice as we can. Your help is greatly appreciated. Thank You, St. Paul Building & Grounds Ministry.

### **Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving**

As St. Paul begins to prepare our budget for 2018, it is important to know what support we can depend on from our members and friends. By knowing what you are willing to commit financially, we are able to better plan for the future. Please consider setting up a recurring giving plan. Automating your financial commitments means your contributions will be received on a steady, uninterrupted basis.



To set up a recurring giving schedule, visit us online at [www.stpaulucctaylor.org/giving](http://www.stpaulucctaylor.org/giving), locate the Online Giving button and set up your recurring giving schedule. The first time you give, you will select a password that will enable you to log in at any time and make changes to your giving or view your complete online giving history. St. Paul also offers a mobile version of our online giving page to make it easy for you to give anytime from your smart phone. Simply scan the image you see here using your phone's QR reader. If you need additional assistance or have questions, please contact Gary Peters, our Treasurer or Dan Case, Auxiliary Trustee.

**AUDIO COPIES OF ST. PAUL SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES** are available for your listening pleasure. Just log onto the St. Paul Web Site "[stpaulucctaylor.org](http://stpaulucctaylor.org)", select the "Our Worship Together" tab, then the Worship Services (Audio)" tab. Directions are given on the Service page. Services are also available on the Mobile application as well. If you have any questions, please contact Gary Peters, Michael Isaacs or Dan Case.

## **MEMORIAL DONATIONS**

### **MUSIC GROWTH FUND-**

In Memory of: *Al Whited* From: Tracy Hoffman

### **MEMORIAL FUND-**

In Memory of: *Don Pearson* From: Phyllis Pearson

In Memory of: *Irene Anthony* From: Stephen & Millie Packard

### **KITCHEN FUND-**

In Memory of: *Monique Kovach* From: John Kovach

### **TREE OF FAITH LEAF-**

In Loving Memory of: *Clarence & Lillian Fick* From: Harold Fick

**Let us remember in prayer the following members and friends of our church whose funeral and memorial services have been held since Memorial Sunday, November 6, 2016**

**Walter A. Zajac**, October 31, 2016 at the age of 73 years.  
**Walter J. Stanek**, November 12, 2016 at the age of 76 years.  
**Dennis W. Much**, November 17, 2016 at the age of 57 years.  
**Monique Marie Kovach**, November 18, 2016 at the age of 58 years.  
**Florence Ferguson**, January 10, 2017 at the age of 90 years.  
**Donald Lee Pearson**, January 29, 2017 at the age of 75 years.  
**Irene Ina Anthony**, March 11, 2017 at the age of 93 years.  
**Alvin Charles Whited**, March 21, 2017 at the age of 85 years.  
**James Pattenaude**, March 28, 2017 at the age of 77 years.  
**Charles E. Dickelman**, April 5, 2017 at the age of 82 years.  
**Lillian Edna Fick**, April 22, 2017 at the age of 95 years.  
**Alfred L. Rossi**, April 25, 2017 at the age of 83 years.  
**Paul Hard**, April 29, 2017.  
**Helen Kincaid**, May 1, 2017 at the age of 85 years.  
**Patricia Ann Havican**, May 25, 2017 at the age of 71 years.  
**William Louis Schwab, Sr.**, June 1, 2017 at the age of 71 years.  
**Nelda M Ohlinger**, June 9, 2017 at the age of 82 years.  
**Sandra S. "Sue" Kuschel**, June 2, 2017 at the age of 79 years.  
**Mary A. Magyar**, June 20, 2017 at the age of 55 years.  
**David R. Walker**, June 21, 2017 at the age of 98 years.  
**Dolly E. Hoffman**, July 18, 2017 at the age of 88 years.  
**Lois Linske-Thayer**, August 12, 2017 at the age of 84 years.  
**Dennis Koschnitzke**, August 22, 2017 at the age of 62 years.

## **JOYS AND CONCERNS**

**Thank You to the November Merry Mailers:** Fred Miller, Karen Hill, Toni Hill, Thelma Poet, and Grace Wangbickler.

**Thank you to the crew mailing the Stewardship letters:** Sue Mrowka, Arlene Felske, Barbara Schultz, and Cindy Romas.

**ROSE ON THE PULPIT** celebrates the birth of Alma Irene Vernor Drutchas born Friday, October 27, 2017 to Elizabeth & Griffin Drutchas. St. Paul Grandparents are Eileen Vernor & Rev. Geoffrey Drutchas. Sibling is Naaman.

**LOVE AND DEEPEST SYMPATHY** to Oscar Cady, family & friends on the passing of Nancy Lou Cady. Nancy passed away Thursday, November 2, 2017 at the age of 64 years. Funeral was Monday, November 6, 2017 at Michigan Memorial Funeral Home. Rev. Geoffrey Drutchas officiated. Arrangements by Michigan Memorial Funeral Home.

**LOVE AND DEEPEST SYMPATHY** to Tricia & Jim Nault & the Ennis Family on the passing of Tricia's father, James Todt, Tuesday, October 31, 2017.

## **WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS**

**FELLOWSHIP OF CONCERN – PRAYER LIST:** Prayers are requested for the following church members and friends: Megan Barnosky, Phill Felske, Sharon Ferguson, Debbie Hamilton, Dorothy Kaczmarek, David King, Carol & Dennis Komathy, Rev. Bill Kren, Shirlen Powell, Sandi Rose, Eleanor Rossi, David Schmoekel, Sally Sigman, Kevin Staffeld, and Mary Lou Staffeld. *Please contact the church office if your family member or friend needs to be listed longer than three weeks or their health has been restored.*

**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CONGREGATION'S EXTENDED FAMILY:** Brenda & Bonnie (friends, Daisy Stedman), Justin Collins (son-in-law of Gerri King), Lynn Harbin (sister, John Smith), Tamsey Hoffman (friend, Sue Mrowka), Justin Kurtz (friend, Chelsey Schalm), Courtney Matthew McEachern, Kim McEachern (daughter-in-laws, Helene & Neil McEachern), Nicki Pappas (friend, Velma McGee), Brian Reid (friend, Sue Mrowka), Judy Robin (aunt, Lucinda Chavez), Cookie Robinson (sister, Bob Robinson), Trudy Clark-Schiller (daughter, April & Steve Clark), Joyce Smith (sister, the late Harry Thompson), David Staten (brother-in-law, Peggy Staten), Aaron St. Louis, hospice (nephew, Marjie & Charlie Barnard), Denise St. Louis (Sister-in-Law of Marjie & Charlie Barnard), Nicholas Surre (great-grandson, Helene McEachern), Paul Tetreau (nephew, Kathy & Gary Peters), and Victoria Witcher (daughter, Cheryl Stewart).

**PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR CONGREGATIONS' PARENTS:** Michael Bailey (father of Christie Smart), Jan Filpus (mother of Julia-Joy Miller), Bruce Gaither (father, Rebecca Warren), Carol Kuhn (mother-in-law of Lori Kuhn), Stella Ludlam (mother-in-law, Ellen Ludlam), Bill Pinage (father of Brenda Buzo), Sheryl Schwab (mother of Mary Hard & Christine Schwab), Frank Small (father of Chris Chavez), and Anna Thompson (mother, Lucinda Chavez).

**CHURCH MEMBERS & FRIENDS IN NURSING OR REHAB CARE:** Mary Dubke (Marywood Nursing Care Center, W Five Mile Rd, Livonia, 48154), Melva Haglund (Rivergate Health Center, 14041 Pennsylvania Rd., Riverview, 48193), Ilene Krogman (Applewood Nursing Center, 18500 Van Horn Rd, Room #124, Woodhaven, 48183), Helen Parrish (9637 Janet, Taylor, 48180), Eleanor Rossi (Maple Heights, 4600 Allen Rd, Room 415, Allen Park, MI 48101), Melissa Rossi (17652 Colgate, Dearborn Heights, 48125), Vernagene Schafer (Borgess Gardens, 3057 Gull Rd, Kalamazoo, 49048), Ben Scherf (904 E. Lake Mitchell Dr., Cadillac 49601), Betty Steinhauer (Rivergate Health Center, 14041 Pennsylvania Rd. Riverview, 48193) Grace Torango (Rivergate Health Center, 14041 Pennsylvania Rd., Riverview, 48193), and Lisa Wild (Anestic Care Residence, 21071 Tiffany Dr., Woodhaven, 48183).

Link to our online: [CHURCH CALENDAR](#)

## **What's Ahead this Advent and Christmas...**

**Sunday, December 3...**First Advent Sunday Communion, 9 and 10:30 a.m. services  
Come "share the Lord" in our church sanctuary decorated for Advent and Christmas.

**December 3...** Advent by Candlelight, 6:30 p.m. Women's gathering focused on the true spirit of the Advent and Christmas. To share in a beautiful night, contact Deb Case.

**Tuesday, December 5...**Red Hot Purple Angels Christmas Gathering, 6:30 p.m. Our Red Hats chapter meets at Savannah's, 2156 West Jefferson, Trenton, for dinner and Advent/Christmas fellowship. Advance reservations (\$28) necessary: contact Sally Sigman, 313-291-1221.

**Thursday, December 7...**'Blue Christmas' Service, 7 p.m. A special gathering to remember loved ones at holiday time. We meet in the church parlor for sharing; then gather in the sanctuary for candles of remembrance, prayer, and a celebration of our faith.

**Saturday, December 9...**'St. Paul Day' at Santa's Magic Forest, 1-8 p.m.  
Our church volunteers welcome visitors to the Downriver's finest holiday display at the Heritage Park Activity Building in Taylor.

**Sunday, December 10...**Taylor Community Chorus Christmas Concert, 4 p.m.  
Under the baton of St. Paul Music Director Tracy Hoffman and with the voices of many church members, the Taylor Community Chorus presents its annual Christmas Concert: "One Small Child This Christmas Night" William D. Ford Senior Center 6750 Troy Street, Taylor. Admission: \$8 donation.

**Thursday, December 14...** Women's Christmas Luncheon, 12:30 p.m. The Women's Fellowship, the Sew n' Sews Sewing Guild, and the Dorcas Society join for a festive Christmas lunch at Toast Family Dining, 22100 West Road, Woodhaven. All Women of our church family are invited to join us. Advance reservations: contact Toni Hill-313-291-1221.

**Sunday, December 17...** "A Candy Cane" Children's Christmas Pageant, 10:30 a.m.  
Our church school children perform a Christmas play on Fellowship Hall stage for the entire congregation. A light lunch follows. Pastor Drutchas leads the 9 a.m. sanctuary service.

**Sunday, December 24...**"Festival of Lessons & Carols," 10 a.m. Our Festival on the morning of Christmas Eve shares the the story of the nativity told through lessons from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and the many carols we all love to sing. There will be a single service of worship—the first in our shift to single services through January 14.

**Sunday, December 24...**Christmas Eve 'Coming Home' Candlelight Services, 7 and 11 p.m. Honoring Christ's birth with a traditional candlelight services that culminate with open communion and the singing "Silent Night" and the Lord's Prayer. Everybody's welcome and invited