

TIDINGS

St. Paul United Church of Christ
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www.stpaulucctaylor.org
Interim Pastor - Rev. Linda Anderson
Minister of Christian Education - Pastor Cheryl Schalm

December 2023

Calendar of Events

Sunday December 3rd - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.
1st Sunday of Advent - Communion Offered
Advent by Candlelight Program

Thursday December 7th - Blue Christmas Service - 7:00 p.m.

Sunday December 10th - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday December 17th - Children's Christmas Program - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday December 24th - Christmas Eve Service - 10:00 a.m.
Christmas Candlelight Service - 7:00 p.m.

Monday December 25th- MERRY CHRISTMAS - Office Closed

Sunday December 31st - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.

Monday January 1st 2024 - HAPPY NEW YEAR - Office Closed

Sunday January 7th 2024 - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday January 14th 2024 - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.

Sunday January 21st 2024 - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.
Annual Meeting of the Congregation - 11:00 a.m.

Sunday January 28th 2024 - Church Service & Sunday School - 10:00 a.m.
Installation of Council Members

Welcome Rev. Linda Anderson- Interim Pastor

Rev. Linda Anderson comes from Dearborn, Michigan to serve as our Interim Minister. Rev. Linda holds a Masters in Divinity from Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan. She was ordained in 2003 and has served several congregations throughout the Detroit Metropolitan Area. Her call to ministry is founded in the concept of servant leadership. While always serving God, the



minister is equally called to love the congregation which they serve. The minister must meet the people where they are and journey with them into a place of greater service, peace and love. Rev. Linda is a single mother of two children now adults with children of their own giving her the blessing of 5 grandchildren. In addition to her role as minister, Rev. Linda enjoys Local Mission work with Rippling Hope, National Mission work with NOLA and Habitat in Virginia, and International Mission work with Mission Mazaua and Pan America Institute in Mexico. She also

enjoys her book club and attending local theater, including Tipping Point and Hillberry. Frequently, Rev. Linda plays the role of a Quaker woman who is a member of an historically Christian group of religious movements formerly known as the Religious Society of Friends in the Historic First Congregational Church of Detroit Underground Railroad Living Museum.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EDITORIAL

A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." ~ Isaiah 40:3

Have you ever been asked why Christians celebrate Advent?

Advent reveals God's faithfulness in His promises. The world needs genuine hope as creation longs for Jesus' return. Advent helps us look beyond our current problems and the evil we witness in our world today. Instead, it's a time in which we focus on God's promises and the five attributes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Christ.

Without Advent, we don't get the opportunity to consider the beginning, God incarnate, nor the end, the risen Christ. Void of those things we could not realize the bigger invitation of being with Jesus forever.

Throughout the season of Advent, we prepare our hearts for Jesus' eventual return.

Wishing you and yours a blessed Advent Season and a very Merry Christmas.

In Christ, Pastor Cheryl Schalm, Minister of Christian Education

Christian Education Activities

Rock Hard in Faith Youth Happenings

DECEMBER:

Youth Christmas Brunch: Following the Christmas Pageant rehearsal on Saturday, December 16th, the youth will head to Leon's for a Christmas Brunch. Please contact Pastor Schalm to confirm your participation.

Christmas Pageant: The Sunday School Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 17th. All participants should arrive by 9:40 a.m. to get into their costumes.

Youth Cookie Walk: Youth are asked to bake and bring cookies for this youth fundraiser that will be held after the Christmas Pageant luncheon.

Christian Education Christmas Caring Campaign

Christian Education kicked off their **Operation Christmas Child** shoebox campaign on Sunday, October 29th. A total of 51 shoe boxes were collected and taken to the collection center on November 19th. All gift filled shoe boxes will be distributed to children in need throughout the world. A HUGE Thank You to all those who filled a box!

All church members and families also have an opportunity to serve as a child's "Angel" this Christmas. Simply select a tag from the Angel Tree in Fellowship Hall, grab a gift suggestion sheet, log the tag number on the sheet located in front of the tree, purchase and return an unwrapped gift by December 10th. Recommended gift range is \$20 - \$30. **The Salvation Army Angel Tree** program benefits children in need in our local communities

Additionally, a tub has been placed in the back of the sanctuary and in the Sunday School Welcome Center area for donations of **hats, gloves, scarves and undergarments**. All items will be delivered to the Salvation Army so that they can be included in their Family in need Gift Shop.

Meditation Monday'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

All post-high school young adults are invited and encouraged to join the Young Adult Bible Study group. Whether you have been a regular or are considering coming for the first time, we welcome and look forward to your company and participation. Please contact Pastor Schalm (734) 255-0935 for more information.

Calling all College Students and Recent High School Graduates

Christian Education is in need of 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 to Pastor Schalm or to the church office.**

COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: CELEBRATE THE DAY

Relient K is an American rock band formed in 1998 in Canton, Ohio, by Matt Thiessen, Matt Hoopes, and Brian Pittman during the band members' third year in high school and their time at Malone University. Relient K purposely spelled their name incorrectly so they would not infringe on the copyright of Chrysler's K car known as the Plymouth Reliant K. The K cars from Chrysler are credited with saving the company in the late 70s and early 80s as Lee Iacocca turned Chrysler around.

The congregation of St. Paul UCC Taylor has much to celebrate in a year of transition that will no doubt stretch into 2024. The congregation has seen many pulpit supply pastors. Last December 2022 we said goodbye to Rev Geoff after his 35-year career serving the UCC and St. Paul UCC Taylor – the longest serving tenure in the 140 year history of St Paul which began as St Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church founded by 25 families. We welcomed in February 2023 Interim Minister Rev George Reed who served our congregation through November 2023. We also welcome our 2nd Interim Minister Rev Linda Anderson in 2023. There are some churches in the UCC which have no Interim ministers, let alone supply pastors. Count our blessings in that we have had Interim Ministers available to us while our Search Team discerns two candidates to be our Settled Pastor. In the days of clergy shortage, not many churches have experienced the blessed provision St Paul UCC Taylor has enjoyed in 2023. As 2023 nears its end and we approach 2024 under incoming President Sue Mrowka, these aforementioned reflections come to mind as well as taking inventory of how much Jesus the Christ has touched our lives.

This reflection raises recall of the little-known band called Relient K and their heartfelt song that causes pause and reflection – **I Celebrate the Day**. The young band On August 22, 2007 produced the album **Let It Snow, Baby... Let It Reindeer** and released it on October 23, 2007, selling 4,500 copies in its first

week. Yes, some of their music is very loud, yet others give us something to ponder. The band combined traditional Christmas hymns such as **Silent Night** and **Away in a Manger** as a single song. As *Away in the Manger* was starting to end, a segway led to an original, new song entitled ***I Celebrate the Day***.

Every time "I Celebrate the Day" is played it forces the listener to reflect on the prior year. The singer of the tune is reflecting on how much Jesus the Christ touched their lives and in spite of how Jesus touched them, they confess that Jesus is finding them in the exact same place as New Year's Eve a year ago. They go on to blame their own lack of persistence with strengthening their relationship with Jesus resulting in being less than half as close with Jesus as they want to be. As the singer reflects on being less than half as close to Jesus as he wants to be he rhetorically asks Jesus questions:

1. The first time that You opened Your eyes did You realize that You would be my Savior?
2. The first breath that left Your lips did you know that it would change this world forever?

The singer looks back to the day Jesus was born and ponders the fact that the baby Jesus would one day save him by being born, by what Jesus did in life and ministry, death and resurrection, how we died to take away our sin and justified us when he rose. He then concedes that he needs to celebrate the day Jesus was born declaring: **I celebrate the day that You were born to die so I could one day pray for You to save my life.**

In a related song on the same album entitled "Merry Christmas, Here's To Many More" seems to continue and progress the thoughts of "I Celebrate the Day" reflecting on making it through another year without collapsing and being thankful to God for that and at the same time while being torn between what keeps him whole and what tears him apart. Home for Christmas he decides to get out of the winter weather as he sees all his friends indoors singing "Merry Christmas, here's to many more". When he goes inside by himself, he is filled with hurt. He is hurt to be all by himself on a cold and lonely Christmas Eve. He fears living his days alone but he recalls Jesus tells him that He won't leave. The singer looks to the east and sees a star that reminds him of the Star of Bethlehem. The sight beckons him to sing: **Jesus Christ has blessed my life to know just who you are. You are my hope.**

He sees his friends indoors again singing together the same song – "Merry Christmas, here's to many more." With the hope and blessing of Jesus the Christ filling him up this time he decides to join his friends and declares:

- 1. Deck the halls with mistletoe**
- 2. Let go of your heavy burdens and let them burn in a bright fire and go up the chimney**
- 3. Hear song in every room**
- 4. Sing, "Merry Christmas, here's to many more!"**

I encourage you to purchase the album *Let it Snow, Baby...Let it Reindeer* by Relient K and enjoy the songs (even the loud ones) this season of hope and joy. So Celebrate the Day that Jesus the Christ was born to be your Savior and Merry Christmas to all of you and here's to many more as we move into 2024 and support our new Council President Sue Mrowka who takes office in February 2024.

In closing, I thank you congregation for your patience, prayers, and support for the Council and our new Interim Minister, and our Search Team as we transition toward a new year in 2024 with a new mission, a new Interim Minister in Rev Linda Anderson and new leadership and a closer relationship with our Newborn King - Jesus the Christ our Lord and Savior! Amen!

ALL CHURCH EVENTS

COMING SOON: Christmas Gift Shop Grand Opening, Sunday, December 3, 2023 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

After morning worship on the day of our annual Advent by Candlelight Event, you will have an opportunity to shop at Christian Education's Christmas Gift Shop in the West Room. Invite your friends and neighbors. The Gift Shop will also be open after Advent by Candlelight in the evening for anyone interested in browsing. Please contact Jane Dykowski or Peggy Staten with any questions.

"Advent by Candlelight" Program Kicks off Holiday Season

Sponsored by the Christian Education Ministry, our annual "Advent by Candlelight" program is being held on Sunday, Dec. 3, from 6:45-8:45 PM. This is where one woman hosts a table and asks about seven other ladies to join her for an advent program, fellowship and dessert. There will be a sign up sheet during coffee hour all through November, or you can contact Debbie Case. (debbiescase@aol.com). It is quite easy to be a hostess and I will have envelopes for each hostess with all the information. There will also be a sign up sheet for ladies that do not want to host a table but would like to attend. We will do our best to find a place for every lady that would like to attend.

Deadline to sign up is Sunday, Nov. 19th. The table arrangement in the hall is based on the order that you sign your group up by. I will need to know total numbers at each table by Nov. 26th.

'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 Interim Pastor Linda Anderson. For more information, contact the church office (313-291-1221)

Sunday School Christmas Pageant and Luncheon to be Held December 17.

Church members should plan now to attend the annual Sunday School Christmas Pageant that will be held as part of the December 17th's worship service. "The Birth Of Jesus," to include a live nativity will be held in the sanctuary during the 10:00 a.m. service. A luncheon and visit from St. Nick will follow in the Fellowship Hall.

The annual youth sponsored **Cookie Walk** will be held after the pageant in the Westroom. The youth will be seeking donations of baked Christmas cookies for this fundraiser. They thank all bakers and donors in advance for their support.

Christmas Eve Services

On Christmas Eve we will be celebrating the birth of Jesus with 2 services. Our morning 10:00 a.m. will be a regular Sunday service with communion being offered. A second service at 7:00 p.m. will be a candlelight service with communion also being offered. As you arrive for the 7 p.m. service you will be offered a white candle to be used during the singing of Silent Night and Acapella singing of the Lord's Prayer at the close of the service.

For communion at both Christmas Eve services, Facebook live-stream worshippers are asked to use elements from their home kitchen which will be consecrated with prayer along with all other elements shared that holy day/night.

We encourage all Church members to invite their families and friends to join with us for our sacred observance of Christ's birth and the start of the twelve-day Christmas season.

Annual Congregational Meeting Scheduled

The annual meeting of the St. Paul congregation will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2024. 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 2024 budget will be sent to all church members in mid-December accompanied by a letter from the President-elect Sue Mrowka.

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

Tickets still available for St. Paul Fourteenth Annual Wild Game Dinner - January 27, 2024

The St. Paul Building and Grounds Ministry will be hosting its 14th Annual Wild Game Dinner on Saturday, January 27, 2024. Doors open at 5:30 pm, hors d'oeuvres at 6:00 pm and a sit-down dinner at 7:00 pm. It's a fun filled evening with raffles, good eating and great fellowship. Hors d'oeuvre items for the night will include wild chicken chili, salmon dip, sausage, turtle soup, 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. Tickets are \$45/each and can be purchased at the KIOSK table during Coffee Hour, by calling the Church office at (313) 291-1221 or by calling James Poet, Gary Staffeld, or Dan Case. This is always a **sell out event** so get your tickets early. We are also looking for donations that can be used for raffle items or door prizes.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Trustees are seeking to fill Counsel Positions to begin in January 2024

Beginning in January 2024 the following positions are open on Council. Two are needed for the position of Deacon. One to replace Conrad Heidt who is resigning for health reasons (One year term ending in January 2025), and the second a three year term that would end in January of 2026. All other positions needed have been filled.

Please prayerfully consider taking one of these positions. If you are in need of a complete description of what the position entails please contact the church

office and Cindy will give you a copy or see a trustee. If you will serve please speak with Fred Miller, Toni Hill or Marjie Barnard.

Lectors are needed for Sunday Services

If you would like to volunteer or would like more information please contact Cindy Romas in the church office. No experience needed. All information is provided to you.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deck the Halls with Boughs of 'Poinsettias'?

In keeping with custom, our chancel 'Angel Trees' and chancel area will be banked with fresh poinsettias honoring and commemorating loved ones and friends or for a special event in someone's life. You can purchase a poinsettia to be included 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 and posted online throughout the Twelve Days of Christmas. Your poinsettia can be retrieved from the chancel area after the 7 p.m. service. If you need assistance please be sure to ask a deacon, council rep or usher and they will gladly help. To reserve a poinsettia, simply use one of the white envelopes in the pews, include your \$10 contribution per plant, mark the envelope "Poinsettias," and indicate whom you would like to commemorate. The envelope can be dropped in the narthex tithe box, handed to an usher, or returned to the church office. All orders are due by Sunday, December 10th.

The "Christmas Fund Offering" for Retired UCC Clergy and Lay Persons

The Christmas Fund Offering will be received any Sunday in December. For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross, one of our Special Mission Offerings of the UCC Church, has been a way to ensure that a light of love and hope will always shine for the faithful servants of our church denomination who find themselves facing unforeseen financial need. One of the unique aspects of the Christmas Fund is that your offering provides direct financial assistance to individual UCC clergy and lay church employees via "Thank You" gift checks. With your continued generosity, these faithful servants 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, and how important those experiences were for you. Your contributions do make a difference in the lives of many! You will find a "Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross" envelope included in this Tidings. You may also use Vanco, our electronic online giving source for your UCC Christmas Fund donation. It is easy to set-up a donation. Visit us online at www.stpaulucctaylor.org/giving, click on the blue Online Giving button, scroll down to the bottom of the "Donations" listing, and select UCC - Christmas Fund Veterans of the Cross and enter the amount of your donation. On behalf of the Stewardship of St. Paul, God Bless you, Merry Christmas, and Thank you.

Women's Fellowship Luncheon is December 7th

Women's Fellowship is having their Christmas Luncheon on December 7th at Woodside Meadows Golf Course/Restaurant at 12:30 p.m.. This is open to any women of the congregation who would like to attend. Each lady is responsible for their own meal and beverage. We will need to give them a count of how many will

be attending so that they can prepare a space for us. Please contact either Toni Hill or Marjie Barnard and let them know if you will be attending by December 4th.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study Update

Tuesday morning bible study will resume next year, January 9, 2024, 10:30 a.m. in the West Room. Waiting until next year will give interim pastor, Linda Anderson, time to prepare for the next session of Tuesday morning Bible Study. Any questions, please contact the church office at 313.291.1221.

2023 Budget Report

To begin with I would like to thank each of you for your generous contributions and continued support to the church during 2023. But I am afraid I don't have good news regarding the 2023 budget, our budget income is approximately \$57,400 under our projections as of October. Our expenses are approximately \$31,000 under for the year which is good news. Unfortunately, we are projecting that we will be about \$72,000 under our projected income and only \$35,000 under our expense budget at the end of the year leaving a difference of approximately \$37,000.

We are currently spending about \$3,500 more than we receive in donations each month. Our General Fund went from \$46,000 in January to \$11,300 in October. The General Fund is the account we use to pay our monthly bills and would be like your own checking account.

I am not expecting the budget to improve much during the last month of the year so we are asking every member to review their current financial situation and see if they might be able to give a little bit more in December. I realize that everyone has their own budget and times are not good now with higher interest rates, inflation, etc. Any help with the budget would be greatly appreciated.

I hate to even talk about giving more when I know people are already stretched but we are going through a very difficult financial situation at the church this year. Let's all pray that we hire a settle pastor during 2024 and that our financial picture changes with additional members joining our beautiful community. Dan Case St. Paul Treasurer

HEALTH MINISTRIES

Exercise Class Continues on Wednesday's

Join other church members on Wednesday's from 10:30 -11:30 a.m. for our weekly exercise class led by our outstanding instructor Delissa. She will lead you through a variety of exercises each week. All exercises can be done in a seated position with the use of a chair, a standing position or a combination of both. Can't make it to class, but want to join us from home? Join us on ZOOM. You must be able to access the internet by computer, I-pad, or phone with video availability. You do not have to have to show on camera during class, but you will need to be able to see the instructor. You can also find the zoom link on our St Paul website under 'What's Happening' Health Activities. If you would like to participate or have any questions, contact Kathy Williams. A small donation of \$3 to \$5 is suggested, but not expected for each class you attend. **No class on December 27th and the first class in the month of January is the 10th.**

Our Daily Bread Devotional Availability

If you are interested in reading Our 'Daily Bread', please contact the office. The editions are available in large print and regular print. Please specify the print type that you want. They come every three months. Kathy Williams can send a copy to you via US mail, or you may ask the usher to give you one from the narthex if they are available.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT FUND:

In Memory of: *Elaine Cowper* From: Thelma Poet

MEMORIAL FUND:

In Memory of: *Elaine Cowper* From: Gary & Pat Staffeld

JOYS AND CONCERN

Condolences to the family and friends of **Wayne Jones** who passed away October 12, 2023, at the age of 71 years; **Elaine Clara Cowper** who passed away October 22, 2023, at the age of 89 years. Memorial service was October 26, 2023. Pastor Cheryl Schalm officiated; **Neil McEachern** passed away November 10, 2023, at the age of 89 years. Honor Guard service was November 19, 2023; **Esther Diedrich-Perry** passed away November 17, 2023 at the age of 93 years. Funeral service was November 24, 2023. Pastor Cheryl Schalm officiated.

WE ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS FOR

Church Members and Friends: Judy Albright, Kyle Hard, Dan Newton, Bill Pattenau, Lois Rice, Shirley Robinson, Barbara Schultz, Gabriel Siadak, Sally Sigman, Joan Smarr, Sue Spears, Dianne Sturgeon, Linda Tank, Tom Williams.

Extended Family: Rhonda Wioncek Berndt, Ted Butkin, Marybeth Staffeld Gibbs (daughter, Roy & Mary), Sue Milatz, Debi and Al Petri, Jerry Rossi, Randy Snelson, Rachel Tank (Daughter, Tom & Linda Tank), Jane Zeuner (friend, Sandi Rose) and the Abdual Family (friends, Rosemarie Laslo).

Church Members & Friends in Extended Care or Rehab Care:

Darlene Babin, American House, 16333 Allen Rd., Room 213, Southgate, 48195; Dave Cowper, Michigan House Senior Living, 18533 Quarry Rd., Riverview, 48193; *Melissa Rossi* -17652 Colgate, Dearborn Heights, 48125. *Sally Sigman* - Atria Kinghaven, 14800 King Rd., Room 116, Riverview, 48193; Office: 734-479-5000; *Bert Thompson*, Optalis Health & Rehabilitation, 9150 Allen Rd, Allen Park; Office: 313-386-2150.