

St. Paul's Church
of the United Church of Christ



"The Light" Newsletter
December 2016/January 2017 Edition

GIVING OUR HEARTS

BY: Pastor Chad

I was recently watching a new television show regarding the crowning of Queen Elizabeth in England. This show, called “The Crown,” does a masterful job of interweaving the complexities of family, power, and self identity. The story of King George IV is remarkable and in this particular show there are some common folk from England who come to Buckingham Palace to sing carols to the king during the Christmas season. When they come into his home, he joins them in singing one of my all time favorite carols, “In the Bleak Midwinter.” As I watched the scene unfold I was astounded by the power of the final verse, which speaks to the Christmas season with more elegance than most poetry, liturgy, or sermons combined. The final verse reads:

What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

The power of the Advent and Christmas seasons is that God has come to dwell among us. But, we in the Church believe that it is even better than this....God has also come to dwell *within* us. This reality is a reason for us to never despair, but to rejoice and give thanks to God. I am aware that many of us have faced a very difficult year. We have seen loved ones pass on to the next life. Some have lost their jobs. Others have seen tragedy that they couldn't have imagined possible. Many of you have faced physical pain, surgeries, and physical therapy to rehabilitate your body. Let's be honest, it has been a rough year. Some of you may even feel as the end of the year approaches as though there is very little left in the tank, very little left to give God or this world. I totally get it. In the bleakness of winter, how much more can we possibly give?

As we approach Christmas and the hopefulness of a New Year ahead of us, there is a door within us that we can open, a gift that we can give. This beloved carol reminds us that while there are not always physical or monetary gifts that we can offer, there is a deep spiritual door that we can open for God to enter in. The carol

says we can give Christ our “heart.” The heart is not just a symbolic gesture or a cheesy way of saying “I love you with all my heart.” When we find the scriptures suggesting we love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we find an opening into a spiritual world unlike any other. The heart is the center of our spiritual selves and so to open it to God is to open ourselves to transformation, wholeness, and new life. The New Year is always a time when we can open ourselves to new things and so it is no small thing that Christmas and New Years are often close together. Friends, may this Christmas and New Year seasons be a time when the doors of your heart are opened to welcome in not just the tiny child who came to live and dwell in human form, but who literally lives within you and your life. On behalf of the staff here at St. Paul’s and as your pastor, I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! May it be a time of great joy and may 2017 be a year in which we give our hearts in faith. Blessings one and all, St. Paul’s!

In Christ,

Pastor Chad

Rev. Chad R. Abbott

CHURCH TIDBITS



St. Paul's Nursery

St. Paul's has child care for children ages infants to kindergarten during the worship service in the Nursery on the Lower Level. There is no adult supervision for children first grade and older. It is requested that these children remain with their parents/guardian in the sanctuary during the worship service.

Thanks, Church Council

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee has put together a few activity bags for young school age children who are attending church services. The bags will be located in the vestibule and labeled by grade levels. These bags will be available Sunday.

Recycle Pill Bottles! In developing countries, medications (when actually obtainable) are often dispensed into hands, pockets, leaves or any other available container. We can help improve healthcare quality in developing nations by donating clean pill bottles to help the poor: medicine can be distributed in sterile containers. Please bring your empty pill containers [prescription bottles, large & small, with and without child resistant caps, and over-the-counter pill bottles] for recycling to help others and keep thousands of bottles out of landfills each year! And, by placing a nickel, dime or quarter in each bottle helps with shipping costs. You can drop them in the collection box by the front door of the church. Thank you!

The baskets for collecting Ronald McDonald items, Pill Bottles and Ink Cartridges for recycling have been moved to the Fellowship Hall. This was done in an effort to make our Narthex look neater and cleaner. If you have items to donate but cannot get to the lower level, please ask one of our ushers for help. We appreciate your cooperation as we strive to maintain our beautiful sanctuary.

"Coach a Child, change a life" : Become a Reading or Math Coach!

Are you looking for a way to use your talents and make a meaningful contribution to our community?

One to One: Practicing Reading with Students and One to One: Practicing Math invites the Northern Kentucky community to play an integral role in helping struggling young students with the support they need to be successful. Each volunteer coach commits to meet with a 1st-3rd grade student (as determined by school) 35 minutes once per week during the academic year. There are currently 42 participating schools in Northern Kentucky. Coaches provide children with the time, attention, and opportunities to practice skills that will make a difference in their lives. Each coach is a tutor, a mentor, a motivator. Visit our website at www.nkyec.org or email larstrong@nkyec.org on how to become a *One to One* Coach.

THANK YOU:

Dave and I would like to thank everyone for your thoughts, prayers and many cards over the past weeks for our mom Mary Ceil Bezold and our family.

We are so thankful to be a part of such a loving and caring church family.

Thanks, Cammy and Dave

THANK YOU:

Thanks to all who offered prayers and condolences to us at this difficult time.

**Sue Hatfield
Diane Bihl**

THANK YOU:

To the people of St. Paul,

The support you have shown our family as Wilson goes through treatment for Leukemia is amazing and humbling. We are very grateful for the community of St. Paul and cannot express how much your generosity is appreciated and helpful.

When I was growing up and attending St. Paul I remember how comfortable and welcomed I felt, whether attending vacation bible school, the ice cream social, or just eating doughnuts after Sunday School in the fellowship hall. The idea that the community's arms extend hundred of miles and many years away from those days is remarkable, and I feel honored to continue to be a part of the love of St. Paul.

**Thank you,
Dylan Carr and Family**

THANK YOU:

Your kind expression of sympathy is deeply appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

The family of Eric Raney

NEW ADDRESS

**Glen Racke
River Valley Nursing Home
305 Taylor St.
P.O. Box 402
Room B12
Butler, Ky. 41006**

THOSE WHO SERVE IN DECEMBER

Liturgist

Dec. 4 Roger VonStrohe
11 Karey Thomas

18 Marion Gosney
24 Shannon Abbott
25 Debbie Fowee

Coffee

Dec. 4 Linda Krebs
11 Debbie Yeager &
Jackie Baker
18 Tim Ash

25 Mindy Connell

Acolyte

Dec. 4 Logan Hayslette
11 Brenna Losey
18 Lexi Nicholson
24 Cole Johnson
25 Kennedy Johnson

Communion Set-up: Dec. 4 – Barb Fausz and Helen McAlpin

Ushers:

Dec. 4 10:30 Asbury Turner, Lee Walz,
Jim Miller and Debbie Fowee

Dec. 11 10:30 Shawn Hayslette and Pat Schuchter

Dec. 18 10:30 Ron Sperry and Debbie Fowee

Dec. 24 5:00 Cameron McDonald and Kayla McDonald

Dec. 25 10:30 Jessica McDonald and Leah McDonald

**IF YOU CANNOT MAKE YOUR ASSIGNED DATE, PLEASE
TRADE WITH SOMEONE ELSE AND LET THE CHURCH OFFICE
KNOW.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER FOR ANY OF THE
ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE. THANK YOU!**

THOSE WHO SERVE IN JANUARY

Liturgist

Jan. 1 Amity Kukla
8 Roger VonStrohe
15 Karey Thomas
22 Marion Gosney
29 Shannon Abbott

Coffee

Jan. 1 Dave/Cammy Burling
8 D. Yeager & J. Baker
15 Amy Meyer
22 Tim Ash
29 Mindy Connell

Acolyte

Jan. 1 Shae Weinel
8 Isa Abbott
15 Solomon Abbott
22 Logan Hayslette
29 Brenna Losey

Communion Set-up: Jan. 1 – Mindy Connell and Audrey Thomas

Ushers:

Jan. 1 10:30 Asbury Turner, Sue Hatfield,
Marion & Dorothy Gosney
Jan. 8 10:30 Andrew Saunders and Cammy Bihl
Jan. 15 10:30 Rick Carr and Lee Walz
Jan. 22 10:30 Ron Sperry and Jim Miller
Jan. 29 10:30 Shawn Hayslette and Pat Schuchter

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KNOW.**

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ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE. THANK YOU!**

DECEMBER
Birthdays and Anniversaries

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Cameron McDonald | 7 Fred & Lilla Losey |
| 1 Jessica McDonald | 47 years |
| 1 Kayla McDonald | |
| 3 Dolores Miller | 19 Roger & Kathy VonStrohe |
| 4 Susan Voelker | 47 years |
| 5 Shawn Hayslette | |
| 8 Gary Sperry | |
| 8 Tom Wheeler | |
| 9 Craig McAlpin | |
| 9 Amanda Pohlman | |
| 9 Sandy Smith | |
| 10 Jennifer Vogt | |
| 12 Josh Nelson | |
| 15 Curtis McNichols | |
| 16 Carol Steffen | |
| 17 Fay Racke | |
| 21 Wanda Hornsby | |
| 23 Samuel Edington | |
| 24 Benjamin Dietz | |
| 29 Jackie Poynter | |



JANUARY
Birthdays and Anniversaries

3 David Buecker	14 Ken & Fay Racke
5 Margie Stormer	30 years
6 Kevin Chalk	
6 Julie Enyart	17 Tim & Linda Velten
6 Ginny Lickert Combs	24 years
10 Kenneth Voelker	
10 Brenda Nelson	22 Michael & Amanda Pohlman
13 Carol Valerius	7 years
15 Jackie Baker	
18 Emma Crosson	
18 James Santee	
19 Roger Windgassen	
22 Ruth Beck	
22 Todd Pfeiffer	
22 Roland Wright	
23 Jim Thomas	
24 Becky Horn	
25 Brandon Coplen	
26 Matthew Losey	
26 Andrew Saunders	
28 Annette Boehm	
29 Zachary Dietz	
30 Ann Windgassen	





Do we have your email address? St.

Paul's is continuing to work on our communication and social media outlets so that we can best communicate with as many of you as possible. If you are not receiving our weekly Constant Contact emails about events and the sermon preview, please write your email on the line below and return it to the office or put it in the offering plate.

Thank you!

The Church Office

One of these children needs your help with homework!



**Wanted: Volunteer tutors for Homework Club
at Washington United Church of Christ**

Monday-Thursday, 4:15-5:30 p.m. Tutors asked to volunteer one day a week

Children age 5-11 are matched one-on-one with a tutor to help them complete homework, then do other learning activities.

Our children say ...

My tutors help me finish my homework. It's fun.
-Totianna

My tutors are very nice. They help me with reading and make math sentences.
-Kendall

If I get stuck on a word, they help me. They check my math.
-Kayla

Our tutors say ...

When I leave Homework Club, I have a smile on my soul, knowing I made a difference in these fantastic kids' lives.
-Larry

My student at first told me she didn't like to read -- and now she does. And she has improved!
-Arlene

It's great to witness a student's progress, and especially satisfying when the student shows an interest in a topic.
-Melissa

Call Nancy Matthew (513-280-0399) or Whitney Reardon (513-218-3881) for more information or e-mail wreardonVISTA@yahoo.com

Washington UCC is at 2950 Sidney Ave. in Camp Washington, Cincinnati
Hopple Street exit off I-75

Second Sunday Feast



On Sunday, January 8th we will continue our tradition of the Second Sunday Feast immediately following worship. This will be a potluck luncheon shared by all members of the congregation. If you would like to bring a side dish, main dish, or a dessert to share with others, come get to know newer members, enjoy laughs with friends, and share some of your best recipes with one another. Each month we will always meet down in the fellowship hall for a potluck feast on the Second Sunday. See you then!

Annual Advent and Caroling Event



**When: Sunday, December
4, 4pm-7pm**

**Where: Fellowship Hall and
we will travel to sing
Christmas Carols from
there.**

Young Adults @ St. Paul's

Join us for a



When: Sunday, December 11th 5-7

Where: The Kukla Home
712 Spireridge Rd.
Cold Spring, Ky

What: Bring a soup, bread, or salad to share. No gifts. Just fellowship and games. Childcare provided.

WHITE GIFT PROGRAM 2016

As most of you know, each year our church provides food and gifts to families for Christmas. Each family receives a letter of the alphabet and a symbol to identify them. These symbols are displayed on a front pew with the identifying letter, age, sex, sizes (when available), and toy suggestions on them. The symbols are to be attached to the bottom of the gift you purchase so that they may be removed by the family when they receive them and place their own bows, etc. on the gifts. Symbols will be available before and after church on November 27th, December 4th, and December 11th. If you need more symbols, please make your own in the same color and with the same information on them. After you select your symbols, PLEASE SIGN the notebook available showing which symbols you have selected. On December 18th bring your gifts for White Gift Sunday.

On December 22nd at 9 am boxes of food and gifts will be assembled in the fellowship hall. We always need plenty of elves to accomplish this task. Contact Mindy Connell to help assemble the food boxes and call Charlene Rogers at 635-6501 (Because of surgery, I may not be in church a lot.) to help check off gifts and sometimes wrap additional gifts.

God bless each of you for your part in this wonderful program. The families are so appreciative every year for all that we are able to provide for them.

Charlene Rogers and the Mission Committee

DID YOU KNOW????

According to the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition:

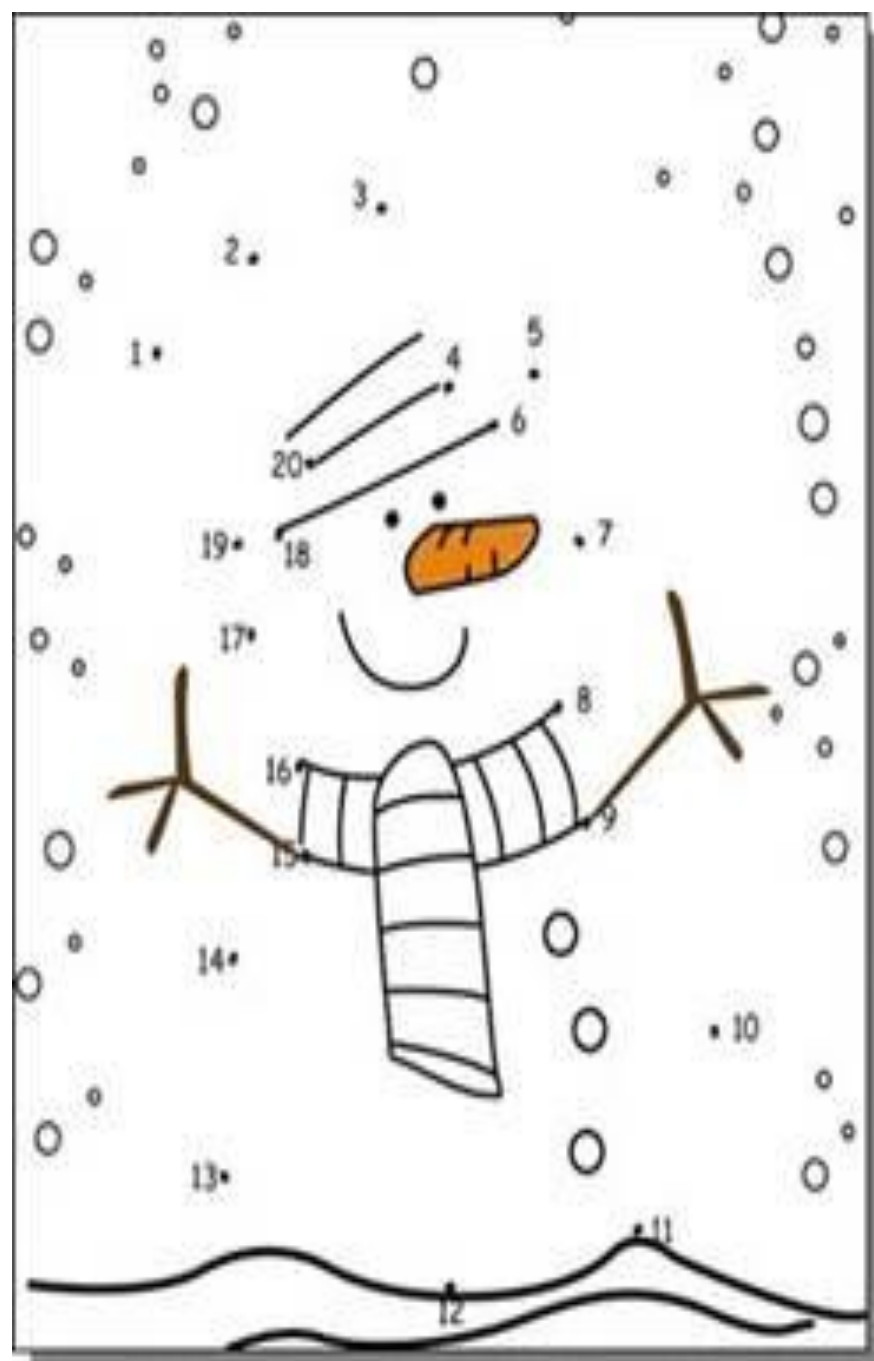
- 39%, of the homeless are children.
- 45% of children who are homeless are under the age of 5
- Families are the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population.
- Families with children (as opposed to single homeless people) make up about 30% of the homeless population nationally.

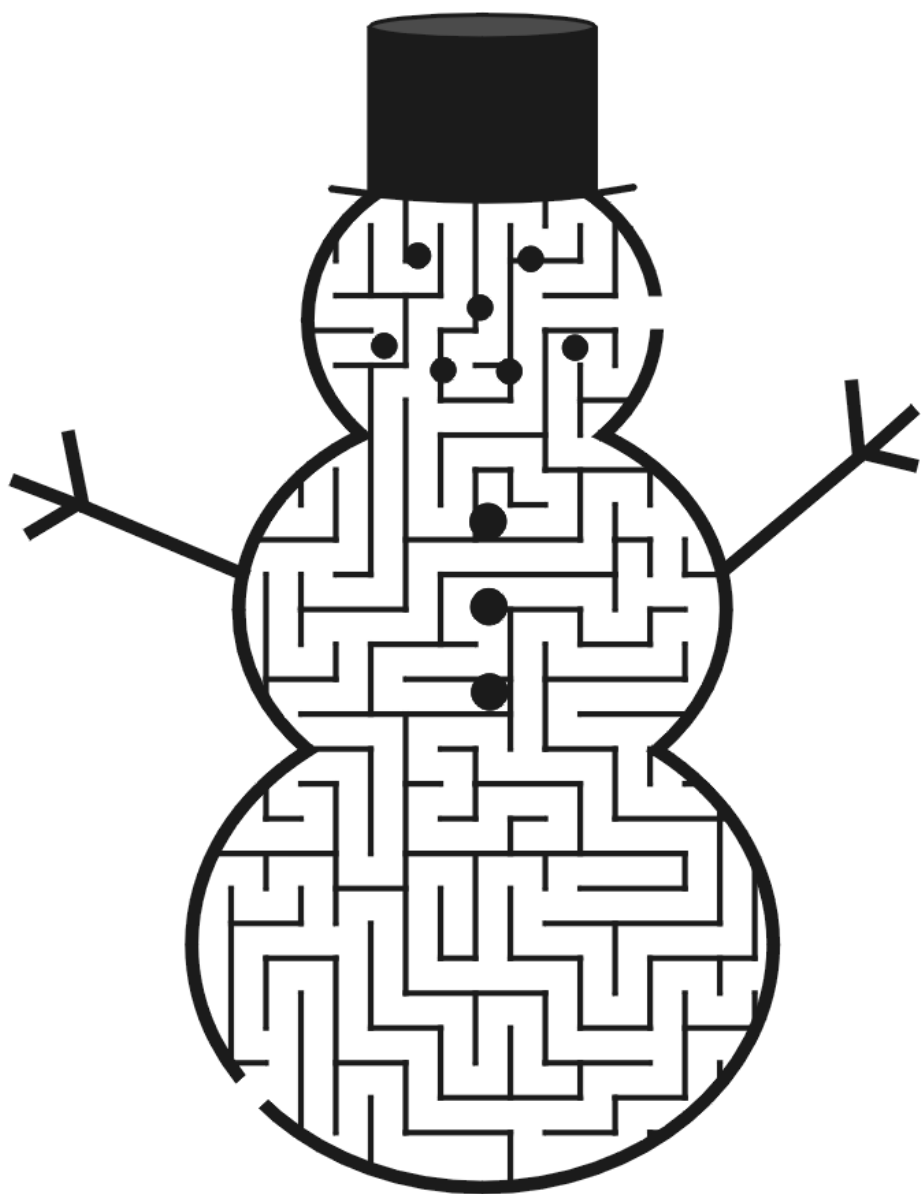


Family Promise is the only organization in the region that enables homeless families to remain together while they work toward a permanent housing solution. Why is this important? Traditionally, homeless shelters are gender specific. Some of the women's shelters will accept boys under 12 but men's shelters usually only accept males. It is very difficult for a family to stay together under these circumstances. The other great thing about this program is that it has an 85% success rate.

St. Paul's UCC has decided to be a part of the solution for homeless families. We will be joining with other church families in the community to provide support for homeless families through Family Promise of Northern Kentucky. What does that mean? One day every 12 weeks we will help with transportation, meals, and companionship for these families.

If this is a ministry you would like to know more about please let Sarah Lester (lesters@fuse.net 859-496-4929) or Teresa Knauer (knauerteresa@gmail.com 859-750-3573) know. We are looking forward to working with you and our homeless neighbors. Your prayers are always appreciated.





St. Paul's Church

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Alexandria, KY 41001
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