



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at St. Paul's Church!

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter in the (Continuing) Age of Pandemic
A Message from Pastor Paul Forrey

Last year, our experience of Lent was cut short by the onset and initial spread of the pandemic in our country. For the first time, we were unable to come together for worship and fellowship during a most sacred period in the church year, particularly Holy Week and Easter. We transitioned to a video devotional format as best we could, but it just wasn't the same.

It certainly appears that we will be able to continue sanctuary worship through all of Lent this year, and we look forward to the Maundy Thursday service and Easter services. While we are not planning family activities such as the Palm Saturday family activity or our Spring movie night, at least we can take comfort in knowing that worship services will continue.

At the same time, we know that these services won't be the same. A significant portion of our congregation will not return to sanctuary services until they and more of us have received a vaccination, and we will not be able to praise God together as we love to on Easter.

We continue, even though some of our shared life together is starting to look a bit more familiar, in a time of change and upheaval. But this is not the first time (or the last) that the church has sought to thrive during tumultuous times. Sometime in the middle of the first century, St. Paul wrote to the community in Ephesus experiencing significant change, conflicting customs, and shifting social realities.

Paul wrote, "In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near" (Ephesians 2:13). He was referring to ways that people of diverse religious and social backgrounds can become one people in the church that ministers in Jesus' name.

"In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near." St. Paul's words speak, certainly, to our fractured society today. During deep division and hostility, the apostle reminds us that unity in Christ doesn't mean that our differences don't matter or that we should conform to one way of thinking and living, but that through the presence of Christ we can live together peacefully—because Christ holds all of our differences within himself. Christ unites us in a religious and social movement that does not allow the barriers we erect to separate people to endure.

"In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near." Paul's words also remind us that, though all of us do not yet share together in Sunday morning worship, we are still the church—a holy people that God in Christ weaves together whether we are near or far. We are the beloved community of Christ empowered for ministries of healing, reconciling, and hoping.

Last month, the Worship Team asked us to keep in regular communication with one another. In a sense, they asked us to see that, though we are far off from one another, we can be brought near through the love and power of Jesus Christ. Let's keep up this practice, particularly as we move into Holy Week and Easter. May

our praise on Easter morning announce that God in Christ always raises up our love and compassion for one another, and that nothing—not even physical separation—can keep us apart.

“In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near.”

Patricia and I offer you our love and blessing!

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

Mar. 1 Darlene Haigis
7 Sharon Ash
18 Cammy Bihl
23 Greyson Ballinger
29 Cammy Burling

Mar. 8 Kyle & Lyndsee Ballinger
13 years
Mar. 15 Dennis & Karen Zimmerman
38 years

Serving in March

Liturgist

Mar. 7 9:00 am Evelyn Dietz
10:30 am Roger VonStrohe

Mar. 14 9:00 am Debbie Yeager
10:30 am Debbie Fowee

Mar. 21 9:00 am Patricia Ross
10:30 am Charlene Rogers

Mar. 28 9:00 am Claudia Chalk
10:30 am Sarah Lester

Ushers

Mar. 7 9:00 am Wanda Hornsby and Jim Miller
10:30 am Pat Schuchter and Lee Walz

Mar. 14 9:00 am Margaret Perry and Patricia Ross
10:30 am Roger & Kathy VonStrohe

Mar. 21 9:00 am Jim Miller and Margaret Perry
10:30 am Debbie Fowee and Sally McNichols

Mar. 28 9:00 am Gary Sperry and Wanda Hornsby
10:30 am Everett Harrison and P. Schuchter

History Corner

Church constitution

A look back to some changes to our constitution:

1936 – no games of chance or intoxicating liquor or cards in church activities



1937 – the right to membership will be taken from a member if they do not pay dues for 3 years (excepting the member is TOO poor)
At 16 years of age, confirmed children become voting members

1958 – folk and square dancing allowed



Kids,
It's time to prepare our hearts and minds for Easter!

Each Monday - Saturday during Lent pick out a small egg and try to complete the task inside the egg.

Each Sunday find the large egg & colored paper with the correct date and discuss the Bible verse with your family.

You can do the crafts anytime!

Please share pictures, drawings, skits, dances, etc. with our private Facebook page:
St. Paul's UCC Kids

Especially waving the palms for Palm Sunday for March 28. We can't wait to see you!

Newsletter Deadline

We would love to have your articles for the newsletter. Please submit articles to the office. The deadline for the April newsletter is March 22nd.



THANK YOU again for your extremely generous support of the Backpack Program which feeds kids at Campbell Ridge Elementary!

We are united with other local churches who take turns providing food to all students in the Campbell County School District. This year's St. Paul's Super Bowl prediction is:



I apologize for the premature announcement of Tampa Bay, I had not taken into account the total Breeze & mail-in donations. Thank you, Jeff for setting the record straight! Evelyn

The family of Ed Dietz, Jr. thanks everyone for the kind words, stories, cards, flowers, and visits. Dad would have enjoyed all of it. He had a wonderful 90 years of life. We appreciate your prayers and thoughtfulness at this time..

St. Paul's UCC, Alexandria, KY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES—January 12, 2021

PRESENT: President- Charlene Rogers, Vice President-Claudia Chalk, Financial Secretary-Jeff Enyart, Treasurer-Sandy Smith, Recording Secretary-Debbie Yeager, C.E.-Amity Kukla, Missions-Sarah Lester,

Stewardship-Cammy Burling, Worship/Ministry-Connie Ballinger, Trustees-Roger Von Strohe, Tech Support-Craig McAlpin, and Pastor Paul Forrey.

Charlene opened the meeting and said a prayer, and Council members recited the Council Covenant. Charlene expressed her goals for the year. She reminded members to post their reports in a timely fashion and read the reports before each meeting. Her immediate goal is to get the congregation re-engaged.

COVID Update: After a discussion, Roger Von Strohe made a motion to return to in-person services at 9 and 10:30 AM on Sunday, January 17, 2021. Connie Ballinger seconded and the motion carried. Roger will speak at the beginning of services on January 17 to remind the congregation of the safety measures. Paul expressed appreciation to Council for their consideration of his and Patricia's comfort level regarding returning to in-person services. Sarah asked if the yoga class would be allowed to meet in the Fellowship Hall. Roger Von Strohe made a motion that yoga and AA groups be allowed to meet in the Fellowship Hall. Cammy Burling seconded and the motion carried. Groups will be reminded of the safety protocol.

- 1) **SECRETARY'S REPORT**—Claudia Chalk made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2020 Council meeting as posted on OneDrive. Sandy Smith seconded and the motion carried.
- 2) **TREASURER'S REPORT**—Sandy's report was posted on OneDrive. She also reported that the current balance in the checking account is \$18,064.02 and the balance in the temporary account is \$19,698.68. Cammy Burling made a motion to accept the report and pay the bills. Jeff Enyart seconded and the motion carried.
- 3) **FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S REPORT**—Jeff reported:
 - The use of Breeze for donations was better than expected for 2020. He expects it to be used more in 2021.
 - The budget shortfall for 2020 was less than expected.
 - Projects for 2021 include using Breeze more and creating a chart of accounts.
- 4) **TECH REPORT**—Craig reported that he is now handling the post-production of the worship videos and children's chats.
- 5) **PASTOR'S REPORT**—Paul reported:
 - He is extremely appreciative of Craig's help with video post-production.
 - He thanked everyone who helped make the Christmas Eve caroling event a success, particularly Melinda Schamer, Mindy Connell, the Bell Choir, and members of the Choir.
 - Roger Von Strohe, Charlene Rogers, Sarah Lester, and Jeff Enyart have agreed to work on the task force that will oversee the revision work on the Constitution. Each leadership team is responsible for drafting their section of the document. Sarah and Paul will work with teams to offer assistance.
 - He is working with the Stewardship Team in planning the “Your Church, Our Future” event for later this year. Each leadership team will be asked to develop at least one question pertaining to their ministry that small groups will discuss.
- 6) **CE BOARD**—Amity reported:
 - The virtual Christmas skit was a success as was the virtual Christmas party. From now on for virtual parties, they will send the link to all families, even those who don't RSVP.
 - There is a need for more volunteers to record Children's Chats.
 - The team is preparing for Lenten activities. Each family will receive a basket with 40 task cards containing a challenge or reflection for each day. For each Sunday during Lent, there will be a large egg with a Bible verse and chocolates. Families will be asked to record a video of a reflection on that verse. This will replace children's chats during Lent.
 - They are considering holding a book study using Zoom.
- 7) **MISSION**—Sarah reported:

- Several mission opportunities have been on hold during the pandemic. Family Promise is hoping to be able to receive families in March.
- The team will discuss ways to help Brighton Center in the future.
- Sarah praised our congregation for their generosity, particularly for their aid to the Harrell family after their house fire and the success of the White Gift Program. Our congregation helped 10 families with a total of 33 children this Christmas.

8) STEWARDSHIP—Cammy reported:

- The team is continuing to make plans for the Your Church, Our Future event.
- Constitution revisions will be discussed at the next meeting.

9) TRUSTEES—Roger reported:

- The sound system is over 25 years old and needs to be replaced.
- A question regarding the status of the lower level remodeling project was posed. Jeff answered financial questions and Roger answered logistic questions about the on-going project. Eventually, this discussion was tabled until next meeting.

10) WORSHIP/MINISTRY—Connie reported:

- The team is grateful to the music ministry for all the work they've put into our worship videos and the Christmas Eve caroling service.
- They are discussing ways to have communion safely. We have purchased individual communion elements.
- There is a need to recruit and train ushers and sound board operators.
- Lent and Easter will be discussed at the February meeting.
- There will be an article in the next newsletter reminding the congregation to “pass the peace virtually.”

11) VICE-PRESIDENT---Claudia reported:

- Claudia presented staff vacation policies. After a discussion, Cammy Burling motioned that we amend the policies, changing the wording from “Council must approve it” to “Council will be notified, and approve both. The motion carried.
- Claudia presented a staff sick leave policy. After much discussion, the policy was sent back to the Staff Parish Relations Team for clarification.
- The Endowment Committee met in January via Zoom with the Morgan Stanley representative. The current value of the portfolio is \$568,000 including \$121,000 in cash and equivalents. There were no withdrawals in 2020. The committee made the decision to invest \$10,000 per month for the months of January, February, and March in the Vanguard VIG fund. Fred Losey, the committee's authorized contact with Morgan Stanley, will get information to share with the congregation about legacy giving and Required Minimum Distribution charitable giving.

12) PRESIDENT'S REPORT—Charlene reported:

- The Membership Team has been working to update the membership list. Letters were sent to members who have been inactive. After receiving responses, they have updated the membership roster to active and inactive. Connie Ballinger made a motion that we change the status of the membership list received from the Membership Team. Sarah Lester seconded and the motion carried.
- Melinda Schamer has accepted another part time job. She may need a form filled out stating that she has worked at least 125 days with children. Council agreed to provide this document if it is necessary.

The next meeting will be held on February 9, 2021, at 7 PM. The meeting was adjourned and Council prayed the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Debbie Yeager, Recording Secretary



St. Paul's Church

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Where God is still speaking