



the Cornerstone

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST | FEBRUARY 2018

“Discerning Wholeness”

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” ~John 5:2-8

I have always been struck by this scripture because of the question Jesus asks of the man, “Do you want to be made well?” It seems like such an absurd question. Who doesn’t want to be well? Physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationally, who, if given the choice, would opt for the path of less wholeness? No one, right? Well that is, so long as the pathway to wholeness is not one that demands too much of us. Certainly we all would choose the path to wholeness if it didn’t involve a needed change in us. You know, where you wake up one day and all of sudden everything is improved in the ways in which you had wished, with the only major change in you being one of greater contentment, peace, and happiness.

I am continually struck by this scripture in realizing that the question, “Do you want to be made well?” is a deep and challenging question that needs to be honestly answered before any of us can truly begin the journey of healing. In this question we are asked if we are ready and willing to surrender all that has held us from wholeness to this time: excuses, bitterness, resentment, blame, denial, or any of a host of other things that keep us from taking responsibility for the work we need to engage in for healing and wholeness. To say yes to this question can mean opening the floodgates of pain and grief as we surrender the source of what has kept us bound and broken. Yet, only in this surrender can we begin to receive of the healing that God has for us, which will call us to be a new creation bound not to the past, but emboldened by God’s future.

Church Events

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| Feb 14 | Ash Wednesday |
| Feb 16-17 | Hoagie Sale |
| Feb 18 | Scout Sunday |
| March 6-8 | Shoo Fly Pie |
| March 11 | Daylight Savings |
| March 25 | Palm Sunday |
| March 29 | Maundy Thursday |
| March 30 | Good Friday |
| March 31 | Holy Saturday |
| April 1 | Easter Sunday |
| April 3-5 | Apee Cake Sale |

continue on page 2...

“Discerning Wholeness” ...continued

It is during the season of Lent that all people are invited into this journey of discerning God’s wholeness. It is why we begin the journey with ashes that remind us of our mortality and death while pointing us to the resurrection of Jesus. In this we are given courage to let die within us what needs to be handed over to death, fearing not the pain and sorrow that may come, but trusting in the newness of life that will be birthed through the power of Christ’s redemption.

Let us journey well in this season as we discern the healing and wholeness God is inviting us each to.

Yours In Christ,

Pastor Joe

February Worship Schedule

February 4th, 9:30am

Pew Communion

February 11th, 9:30am

Children’s Message & Youth Education Classes
(0-9th grade)

February 14th, 7pm

Ash Wednesday

Communion by Tables

February 18th, 9:30am

1st Sunday of Lent / Scout Sunday:

Luncheon Fellowship provided by the Scouts to follow the worship service

February 25th, 9:30am

2nd Sunday of Lent:

Youth Education Classes (0-9th grade)

Upcoming Dates to Note:

Sunday, March 25th

Palm Sunday

Thursday, March 29th, 7:30pm

Maundy Thursday Worship

Friday, March 30th

Good Friday

Sunday, April 1st

6:30 & 9:30am Easter Worship Services

Ash Wednesday Worship

February 14, 7pm



On this year’s Saint Valentine’s Day, Christians across the world will gather to remember the love Jesus poured out for us and for all of creation as we begin the 40 day journey to Easter with the imposition of ashes and the reminder that we are dust and to dust we shall return. The worship of Ash Wednesday is a service of centering and preparation. It stands like a marker in the sand by which we declare to God, and ourselves, that we desire growth, renewal, healing, peace, and love that is found in our deepening awareness of Christ’s unity with us. Come, all you who hunger for the journey that leads to life.

Maundy Thursday Planning Team

Out of all of St. Paul’s worship services, Maundy Thursday is among the most unique and spiritually powerful. As such a planning team is forming now to develop this year’s service. The team is expected to have just two meetings, at most, in order to cover the needed planning details. If you would like to be a part of the planning team, or if you were to have any questions, please contact Pastor Joe by February 12th.

Asylum Seekers

Saint Paul’s UCC Exton has requested help in supporting a family that is seeking asylum in the US after fleeing Romania due to persecution. As it was put they were found to be living in less than fair conditions, in need of food and basic living necessities. The Baceanu family is in need of our support. There are a few different ways you can financially help in the supporting this family. You can give through our congregation using a yellow special offering envelope, marking it for “asylum seekers.” If giving by check, make the checks out to St. Paul’s UCC, Birdsboro, and include “asylum seekers” on the memo line. You can also give on line through the “GoFundMe” website: <https://saintpaulsucc.net/ministry/asylum-seekers-ministry>. How beautiful a gift it to help those in need and seeking a better lives for themselves and their families. Please consider giving to this cause. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact Steve Flanagan. Thank you so much everyone.



Spiritual Practices for Renewal

The season of Lent is a spiritually rich opportunity to deepen our connection to God and the life of Christ. Below are some spiritual practices you might consider for this purpose.

Opening Oneself to Blessing

Start or end each day writing down 10 things you are grateful for. At the end of each week, read your list, lightly holding it before God. Each day pick one person to pray for who has graced your life with blessings. The person need not be alive or even someone you have had personal contact with. Daily choose to read one of the celebratory psalms while you meditate on what you have to celebrate within this life.

Opening Oneself to the Living Word

Find a partner who will read a book of the Bible with you over the 40 days of Lent. Lay out a reading plan and a weekly time to connect to discuss the scriptures. Select a parable for each week of Lent. As you read through the selected parable for the week, each day choose to view the parable from a different character's perspective as you invite God to reveal wisdom and truth to you. Daily select a Psalm to read out loud, filling the psalm with your emotions and personal truths...it's amazing what you will hear.

Opening Oneself to Grace

Remembering that you are a beloved child of God, choose to do something you love each week of Lent. Maybe it is an extended walk, a dinner out, a tea party with friends, some quiet time...anything that allows you to know the blessing of being alive. Choose one of Jesus' healing stories for each week of Lent. Each week sit with the story inviting God to speak the healing God is seeking to provide within you. Make a plan to sleep in healthier ways. None of us can grow much in our relationship with God if we are too exhausted to be in relationship.

Opening Oneself to Others

Schedule regular prayer walks through your community, asking God to stir your heart with love and compassion for those around you. Each week, prayerfully consider an act of grace you could offer to those in your community or in your family, and then do them. Weekly hold members of St. Paul's in your prayers by praying through the congregation's directory. (Updated directories are available by contacting the church office.)

Opening Oneself to Christ

Practice a new prayer form – body prayer, centering prayer, walking/kinesthetic prayer, faith imagination, praying through music, etc.... Discern something you are being called to let go of for these next 40 in order to free yourself to serve others in love. This could involve the need to free up time or financial resources. Each week find an image of Jesus that speaks to you with either challenge or embrace. Daily sit with the image asking God to reveal your own thoughts and prejudices related to Christ.

Beautiful Church, Beautiful Steeple, Open the Door, Beautiful People

Our Members, who attended the January 21st, Congregational Meeting, participated in an activity. It was a fun activity to do (and to watch). And it was a blessing as St. Paul's members, young and old, had an opportunity to get to know one another better. We are a gifted lot. The more opportunities we have, to get to know one another, the more our blessings grow.

Part of the 144 gifted members of our congregation, are 15 home congregants who are also gifted. Each year, when we sing Christmas carols at their homes, I have a desire to see them more often, to get to know them better. They have been our worship stewards, elders, greeters, bakers, Sunday School teachers. They have sat in our pews and sung in our choirs. And, today, they continue to be members of St. Paul's UCC.

And so, while each of us take the opportunity to know each other, I will be writing a column for our monthly newsletter, so we can also get to know our home congregants. Each month will highlight someone from our list of home congregants.

~Pat Babel

Frances Margaret Middleton was born on September 25, 1932. Some of you at St. Paul's might know her as 'Fran Johnson'. We might also know her daughter Donna or her grandson Drew. Maybe you pass the peace to Dave and his wife, Diane, or to her other son, Doug. When you see pride in Fran's face, you know she's speaking of her children.

Still, there is more to Fran's story.

Fran's parents, Flora- McMillan and Robert Middleton, met in Scotland and made plans to move to America. Robert was in the military and when his service ended, Flora and Robert were reunited in New York. There, they were married. Their first child, Fran's brother Bob, was born in New York. Later, the family moved to Pennsylvania and settled in Wernersville. Frances was born in the Reading Hospital and grew up in Wernersville.

Fran's brother, Bob, was 9 years older than her. But the age separation did not separate them in their closeness to one another. She speaks of him with great fondness.

Fran also speaks fondly of her childhood friends. She was only four when she met and made a close friend with Hilde. Hilde and

Fran remain friends to this day. Though Hilde now lives in Maryland, they keep in touch through Christmas cards and the like. That's 81 years of friendship and something to smile about.

Fran tells about a time, when she was a teenager, when her and another friend, Irma, enjoyed going to the movies on Penn Street in Reading. "They would stop at a nut shop on the way to the theatre" so they would have something to snack on while watching the film.

Fran likes to be active. As a youngster, she enjoyed hiking and would often hike the hills in and around Wernersville. Fran and her friends also went square dancing. This 'good exercise' was something they had a lot of fun doing.

Fran attended South Heidelberg elementary school. She started her high school years at Wernersville but graduated from Wilson High. Fran's family attended a Lutheran Church in Wernersville. Her mother took her to both Sunday school and church each Sunday.

Unfortunately, Fran's mother died when Fran was just 9 years old. At that time, her brother, Bob enlisted in the military and was later called to serve. When Bob's service took him to India, Fran and her father

were on their own. Mrs. Fisher, a neighbor woman, who was also a friend of Fran's mother, took Fran under her wing and was kind to her during a time when she needed a 'second mom'. This friendship continued through the years.

Fran met her husband-to-be through a blind date. Clyde Johnson was from Birdsboro, PA. After Fran and Clyde married on October 23, 1953, she moved to Birdsboro. Fran and Clyde operated a pizza business in the Farmers Market on 5th Street Highway.

The couple became members of the Reformed church in Birdsboro, that is now St Paul's UCC. Teaching Sunday School was one of Fran's fond memories of St. Paul's. She also had the responsibility of making phone calls to members of the congregation to secure the position of 'greeter' for each Sunday's service. Fran was responsible for enlisting greeters at St. Paul's for many, many years!

Fran continues to attend Sunday Service at St. Paul's when she is able. She said she misses conversations with Grace Staub. When asked about her faith journey through the years, Fran responded that "coming to church every Sunday is just something you do". "You come, You worship, You enjoy."

Announcements

MISSION: Birdsboro 5K

Registration is Now Open!

This 5K & 1 Mile Fun Run is a unique event to bring awareness to the Beautify Birdsboro service projects occurring in the community. Runners & Walkers of all ages are invited to participate. Gather your family, friends, and co-workers. Early registration fees and a guaranteed event t-shirt apply until March 31. After that, registration fee increase and the t-shirts will be available while supplies last. Registration closes at midnight on Wednesday, April 18. Please visit the Mission: Birdsboro 5K web page for more information. The event will be held on Saturday, April 21st and will benefit Mission Trip Birdsboro and St. Paul's UCC.

Mission Trip Birdsboro 2018

“Created by God, Built for a Purpose”

We are excited to announce that Mission Trip Birdsboro will be happening again this year. We have the six area churches returning for another year; St. Paul's, Birdsboro, St. John-Hill, Boyertown, Three Fold Blessings, Where God Calls, St. Paul's, Amityville, Church of the Nazarene, Birdsboro, and St. Paul's Lutheran, Douglassville. With the possibility of two more additional Churches joining as well!

The work days will be Wednesday, July 18th through Saturday, July 21st.—so mark your calendars so you don't miss this Mission Trip! We will need help from preparing breakfast, lunch, and dinner, to gathering supplies, and people to work at the various mission sites. More registration information will be available soon!



In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”
Acts 20:35

Hopewell Love 2017 Year in Review

Food Pantry at the Birdsboro Union Fire Company (2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month)

- ◆ 148 families served on average each month
- ◆ 402 individuals overall served on average each month
- ◆ 20 volunteers serve on average per distribution date

Community Table at the Birdsboro Union Fire Company (2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month)

- ◆ 140 individuals served on average per meal
- ◆ 14 churches and 10 community groups shared in providing this year's meals

Church of the Nazarene Clothing Closet (2nd and 4th Saturdays)

- ◆ 45 individuals served on average each distribution day

Clearinghouse Ministry

- ◆ 40 calls per month for assistance on average
- ◆ 125 individuals on average being touched each month

Volunteers

- ◆ 80 individuals per month on average
- ◆ 500 hours of total service per month on average

Announcements

Ales & Nails – Adult Faith Discussion Group

This March we are launching the new Adult Faith Discussion Group that will meet outside the church. Focusing on topical conversations this group will be designed around discussion series with intentional breaks between each series.

The first series will be on the inspiring and faith provoking book, Midnight Jesus, by Jamie Blaine. Sure to raise questions about life, faith, meaning, and discipleship to Christ, this book is a perfect companion along the Lenten journey.

Discussion gatherings will be held each Tuesday, March 6th – March 27th, from 6:30-7:30pm at Island Pizza, 3060 Limekiln Rd, Birdsboro, PA 19508. Books are available through most retailers and are to be purchased by individuals in advance of the first gathering. If you were to have any questions, contact Pastor Joe who will be facilitating this discussion.

Lenten Coin Boxes Available for Pickup

One of Lent's gifts is providing a defined time period in which we deepen our daily communion with God. As such the congregation provides coin boxes to use throughout the season of Lent as a means to daily call to mind the sacrifice and love of Christ for each of us. For households with children it is a wonderful way to teach about Jesus and the many blessings we have in our lives. For others, it is a daily reminder to slow down and to remember that our salvation is a gift of Christ. Be sure to pick up a coin box or Lenten giving envelope at the church entrances throughout the season of Lent.

Registration Now Open For Summer Camp

If you want to make a life changing impact on a child's life, send them to a week of Christian Camp. There is no question about the power and transformation that is possible when youth are intentionally centered in fun and faith for a week, right alongside their peers, in an environment where they can discover what it means to be loved by God!

To ensure that families can afford this opportunity, St. Paul's provides scholarship assistance (up to half tuition) for any member/member's child interested in attending camp. Applications for the scholarship are available through the church office.

Additionally, summer camp doesn't need to be just about teens and youth, but can be about your family or grandparents as well. Check out the amazing opportunities provided at the Hartman Center in Milroy PA an ACA accredited UCC camp, Bear Creek in Wilkes-Barre an ACA accredited Lutheran, or any of a number of other amazing Christian Summer Camps.

New Gift In Kind Policy

Starting this January we've updated our Gift In Kind policies to better serve individuals within the congregation. As has been done in previous years, individuals are welcome to fill out "Gift In Kind Forms" to allow knowledge of the many blessings individuals contribute to the church on a regular basis. The change is making sure individuals are aware that it is their responsibility to report these gifts on their tax forms and to retain all receipts/information related to the gift with all their other tax records. As per tax law, the individual, not the congregation bears the burden of proof for the gift's value.

Adult Sunday School

The Adult Sunday School Class, which meets every Sunday from 8:30am – 9:15am, is currently studying the scripture verses used in each Sunday's worship. This study will be ongoing until Easter Break, April 1, 2018.

When class rejoins on 4/8/18 we will be discussing David T. Lamb's book, "God Behaving Badly". If you would like to get a head start, the book can be purchased on Amazon for \$13.98.



Highlights from January Congregational Meeting

Ministry Transitions – Stuart Wells

- a. There are still the same few people in leadership roles within the Church. Pastor Joe is leading most teams. We need to find a long term solution for a wider variety of leaders. This will free up Pastor Joe to make wider relationships within the Community and hopefully bring in new members.
- b. Building & Grounds – John Hunter Jr is taking as team leader. Doug Johnson will continue to overlook the Church needs; Joe Cisick will continue to overlook the Christian Education Building; Richard Wolf will continue as Property Manager for the Parsonage.
- c. Treasurer – need to find someone to take over this position with the new role model

Mission Trip Birdsboro – Pastor Joe

- a. We are now in our 5th year of helping our Community and homeowners. This year's Mission Trip will be July 18th to July 22nd. Participating churches as of right now: St. Paul's, Birdsboro; St. John-Hill, Boyertown, St. Paul's, Amityville; Church of the Nazarene; St. Paul's Lutheran, Douglassville. Two more churches may join.
- b. A video of last year's work and testimonials were shared

Mission Birdsboro 5k Race – Jeanne Nuss

- a. Theme – Conquer the Cocalico Rd Hill
- b. We will be holding a 5k Race on April 21st to raise money for Mission Trip Birdsboro and to spread the word about the event. Fun Run starts at 8:30am; 5k starts at 9:00am. Awards are at 10:00am. This is the same day as Beautify Birdsboro.
- c. Will need help the day of the event

Coaching Update - Johnny Hunter III

- a. Looking at Coaching for Clergy – James Latimer
- b. Found out there are different coaches for different aspects of what you want to be coached on
- c. Want someone with small town familiarity
- d. Team to provide an update in April 2018

Financial Mission Plan

2017 Initial Budget projected the end of the year at (\$8,733)

- Ran Hands of Hope fund down to zero
- 2017 Actual General Fund ended at (\$3,659)

2017 Income

- Envelope Giving was up 6%
- Helping Hands gave over \$10,000 towards the General Fund
- Building Usage income over \$10,000
- Hoagie Sales net profit was \$20,557. We tithed \$2,305 to the Community.
- Expenses were 4% under budget

2018 Budget Proposal

- Projecting ending balance of General Fund at (\$25,525)
- Income projection at \$165,565
- Expense projection at \$187,431
- Projecting to end the year with \$8,957 in all funds but due to money in the Mission Trip Birdsboro Fund
- Treasurer presented a breakdown of where the expenses would be coming from. Building & Grounds expense would be up 55% due to some much needed repairs
- Janeen Adil posed a concern that in 2009 90% of the Church's entire budget was property and staff and now that number is at 91%
- 2018 Budget was passed with majority vote. There was one opposition and one abstention

Worship Leadership – February

Worship Date	Worship Stewards	Acolytes	Ushers	Nursery
Feb 4	Wanda Druzba	Natalie Motz	Stuart Wells & Richard Wolf	
Feb 11	Mary Motz	Ethan Nuss	Pat Babel & Lenette Wells	
Feb 14 Ash Wednesday	Pat Babel		Carole Audette & Barb Kerper	
Feb 18 Boy Scout Sunday	Sandi Swavely	Gage Fecera	Boy Scout Troop	
Feb 25	Janeen Adil	Victoria Nuss	Mary Motz & Sandi Swavely	

Ministers of the Gospel of Christ

All Members

Consistory

Stuart Wells, President · Sherry Hunter, Vice President · Dawn Fear, Secretary · Richard Wolf, Treasurer
· Jeff Baker · Bonnie Frankhouser · Carole Audette · John Hunter III · Star Gunn · Steve Flanagan

Ministry Team Leaders

Anna Oister, Helping Hands · Sherry Hunter, Personnel, Hoagies · John Hunter Jr, Buildings & Grounds ·
Dee Christman, Special Events · Rev. Joseph Motz, Touching 1,000 Lives, Mission Trip Birdsboro · Rachel
Flanagan, Christian Education · Holly Bretzius, Mission:Birdsboro 5K · Eloise Stevens, VBS · Janeen
Adil, Elders

Supporting Ministers

Rev. Joseph Motz, Pastor · Janeen Adil, Minister of Christian Spirituality · Grace Griffith, Organist ·
Luwaina Baker, Administrative Assistant · Barbara Kerper, Sexton · Richard Wolf, Treasurer · Rachel
Flanagan, Bookkeeper

*To become more actively involved in the life and ministry of St. Paul's United Church of Christ in our mission
to celebrate the living presence of our Lord, contact a ministry team leader or contact Pastor Motz to see
where you might begin.*