



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL



February 2012

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FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER

Faithful Followers

By Pastor Will Stackhouse

The late President Harry S. Truman made a trip to the old west town of Tombstone, Arizona. Ghosts of the famous and notorious alike crowd the streets of Tombstone. People like Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday abound. When Truman returned from Tombstone he did not talk about the legendary heroes and heroines. Instead he recalled the words engraved on a tombstone of a simple man buried in boot hill. The inscription read: "Here lies Jack Williams. He done all he could."

Included on a churches annual commitment card was a question: "How many Sundays do you plan to attend worship this year?" Persons were to answer 50 weeks, or 40 weeks or 30 weeks and so on. One comment stood out, "We'll come as often as we can." That's not really a commitment, is it? It's like saying, "We'll come when we feel like it," or "When we don't have anything better to do." Is this what Jesus had in mind when He called people to be followers?

Dallas Willard, in the book, *The Spirit of Discipleship: How God Changes Lives*, says that the average Christian has no concept of what it takes to be a disciple of Christ. "For at least several decades churches...have not made discipleship a condition for becoming a Christian. One is not required to be or (even) intend to be, a disciple in order to become a Christian, and one may remain a Christian without any signs of progress toward or in discipleship. Contemporary American churches do not require following Christ in example, spirit or a teaching as a condition of membership...discipleship is clearly optional." Is this what Jesus had in mind when He calls persons to be followers?

Being a modern day disciple of Jesus Christ involves more than just going to worship when the urge hits us. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is more than a worship song (hymn) sung and vague good will toward our neighbors. *Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ is a way of life.*

Throughout the Gospels we find large crowds of people surrounding Jesus. Many are curious about this teacher from Galilee. They want to see and hear Jesus. This person was the talk of many villages-a celebrity if you will. Though the crowds who gathered around were enthusiastic, Jesus wondered if they were really willing to follow. Jesus said, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and child, brothers and sisters, yes, even life itself, cannot be my disciple." That's harsh! Uncomfortable. Jesus wanted the people to understand that being a disciple demanded their whole life-not just the times when it was convenient. It's like the old ad that used to run for the Pony Express riders: "*Duty is hazardous, orphans preferred.*" Jesus wants people to understand what they are getting into.

The Power of an Idea

The most powerful thing in this world is an idea. It may be powerful for good, it may be powerful for evil-but always it is powerful. The world has been blessed from the standpoint of comfort and well-being, by the application to daily life and its problems of the discovery of science. Imagine our world today without the electric light, the steam engine, the wireless, the wheel. How did all this come about? Through the power of an idea. Watt saw steam lift the lid of the kettle-and had the vision of power in industrial life through the energy of that steam. Franklin saw the play of lightning and the idea of its power. Marconi had the idea of messages transmitted through the air, and now, in times past when a ship at sea was in distress half a hundred ships would hurry to the rescue, called by the mysterious voice of the wireless and more recent inventions. When you have an idea as the gathered family of the church, investigate how it might work, ask questions, seek support and make it grow. An idea is power.



**SCOUT
SUNDAY**
February 5, 2012

LENTEN STUDY 2012

Submitted by Pastor Will Stackhouse

The people of Israel who lived in the land of Israel, both before the coming of Jesus and after left a solid record of their lives. By reading the archaeological record we get to glimpse at the times in which they lived and the customs they observed and the festivals they lived which spoke to the growing significance of events of the past and the present moment. It is important that we get to see behind the scenes as a way of uncovering the past in order to better understand our present and future through the truth of God's love and desire for us.

"That the World May Know" began filming in Israel over a decade ago faith (belief) lessons that might help us see, particularly if we never get to visit Israel, to have these experiences and feel the presence. This is what we will be sharing and experiencing during this Lenten Season.

Out of the many video topics five have been chosen for this year's journey back in time to the Land of the Bible. Each lesson is shared on the Tuesday during Lent at 4:00 PM for those who prefer daylight in which to travel and again at 7:00 PM for those who have been working with Community Dinner or have eaten and wish to share the later time.

February 28th is titled Tel Gezer-Standing at the crossroads. Tel Gezer was a trade route that cut across from the Via Maris (the way of the sea) to the King's Highway on the east side of the Jordan. People who came through this route had the ability to flavor the culture living there with their thoughts and beliefs. God put the people of Israel in that piece of geography because God wanted the people who believed in a better way of living might flavor the culture for God and share God's message of hope.

March 6th focuses on the Negev (the Judean and southern Desert) using Psalm 23 and the practice of shepherding in ancient times as trying to help us see how God wants to walk with us and show us a better way of living.

March 13th visits En Gedi in the southern part of Israel across from the Dead Sea, sometimes called the Great Salt Sea. The topic of this session is living water and focuses on the idea that even in the desert where water flows free and refreshing the lush green of flowering plants occurs and the cool stream provides a place of refreshment for both the persons and animals of ancient Israel. It has implication for the New Testament and our lives by focusing on how Jesus becomes living water to not only the Samaritan woman at the well but to us as well.

March 20th focuses on the sometimes treacherous Sea of Galilee in the North of Israel. This lake being no more than twelve miles long and across is approximately sixty feet deep. When the hot winds of the desert blow across the lake and collide with the cool winds from the Golan Heights storms kick up at almost a moment's notice and fierce waves rock the Jesus boats that today carry

pilgrims to this great land on a rocky ride. Jesus reached out to the disciples teaching them that when the storms come in life it is their faith (belief) that should not be shaken but who should find their refuge in the strength and love of one greater than they and us.

The final week of Lenten Studies, March 27th focuses on the Mount of Olives and The Lamb of God. That end of the week prior to what we call Holy Week in our culture Jesus left the northern part of Israel where Jesus said you must confront the culture in which we live at the foot of Mt. Hermon and moved toward Jerusalem and toward crucifixion and ultimately death and resurrection, two significant events are revealed that offer us the reality of Jesus' love for each of us.

You are invited to mark your calendar and experience these times of learning and hope with us.

THANK YOU!

Kay Sheppard would like to thank everyone for their prayers, cards and visits to her during the year.

Opal Howard would like to thank everyone for sending cards. Since she is not able to attend church services any longer, it is a way she can be kept in touch with St. Paul.

LETTERS TO ST. PAUL

From Teresa McDonough and Sheri Johnson - North College Hill Elementary School:

Dear Evelyn Osterbrock and the body that meets at St. Paul United Church of Christ,

We are sincerely thankful for the generous donation of shoes for our students I hope you can envision the smiles on the kids' faces when they are given a pair of "new" shoes. Parents have also expressed gratitude and a bit of relief for help in getting a need met.

Thank you again, and may God Bless You and all your ministries. A special thanks to you, Mrs. Osterbrock, for packing up your car and bringing your husband ☺ and making a delivery to our school! We appreciate all you have done for us over the years!

From Wayne Schleutker:

Just a sincere THANKS to the St Paul Family for all the prayers, thoughts, cards and visits during my recent hospitalization. All were received with great appreciation and again demonstrated just how truly wonderful the St Paul Church Family is. Thanks to the Crafty Critters for creating such a wonderful prayer quilt (Used just about every day!) Thanks to Dot & Gordon Kahle for bringing the quilt to the hospital. Thanks to Pastor Will for his visits which were most comforting and reassuring!"

MINISTRY PROJECTS

Stephen Ministry Training

Stephen Ministry is a proven system for training and organizing people within the church family to bridge the gap and provide quality Christian care for those experiencing tough times.

Since 1975, more than 11,000 churches from 150 denominations have enjoyed the benefits of Stephen Ministries. More than a half-million lay people have been trained as Stephen Ministers to provide meaningful, life-changing ministry to those who are experiencing everything from difficult times to life changing crisis.

This is a way of equipping the people of St. Paul to be trained lay caregivers, to offer Christ's healing love to both church and non-church people.

The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 17th beginning at 9:00 AM and concluding at 1:00 PM. The location for the next workshop is St. James United Methodist Church, 401 Carlwood Drive, Miamisburg, OH 45324. Each workshop is composed of three sessions. Session One: Ministering To Those Experiencing Grief. Session Two: An Introduction to Stephen Ministry. Session Three: How To Care In A Distinctive Way.

Workshop costs are \$15.00 per person or \$50.00 for a group of four or more from St. Paul. If you are interested you may wish to talk with others Sunday and plan a strategy for a group. To register or learn more you may log on to www.stephenministry.org/workshop or for those without access to a computer you may call (314) 428-2600.

This opportunity is provided for you in the cause of caring for others as Christ invites us to be in ministry.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Will

HEALING SERVICE

By Joan Allen

Everyone has a pain, whether it is physical, mental, financial, or emotional. Some pains are harder than others to deal with. Losing a loved one, physical ailments, social pressures, or day to day life can cause each of us to suffer in pain. Please join us on Sunday, February 19th, at 11:15 AM, after the morning worship, for a healing service. We know that pain is personal and hard to share; however sharing and praying can lift the soul and help the hurt. ALL ARE WELCOME AND INVITED. God has placed each of us here for one another and to share His wonders of his Grace and Glory. To do this we must share in each other's pain and struggles. Join us on the 19th and feel a new beginning with God.

Pastor Will Stackhouse, Teri Stackhouse, Evelyn Osterbrock and Joan Allen will facilitate this service.

DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

The Loving Transformation of the Community of Christ

By Teri Stackhouse

Many people in the Church endure traumas or catastrophes that result in acquired disability, and many people have conditions that they are born with. There is much work to be done to overcome life's given or acquired experiences.

Especially with acquired disabilities, the ability of the individual to function mentally, emotionally, spiritually or inter-personally may be difficult, as they recover. This depends on their inner personal and surrounding spiritual resources. [1] A congregation can help to heal, as well as be transformed by supporting people in their recovery. And of course this inclusiveness can help to shape attitudes in the congregation and give new meaning regarding disabilities.

Lent is a spiritual journey bringing new ideas and spiritual growth. How shall we grow together in these coming months regarding inclusion?

Congregational transformation happens because of the Resurrection of Jesus. Jesus provides people the transformation of Easter, solidarity in hope well beyond this life. The hope comes in a cruciform life shape: it is through Him and through companionship with others that Christians live, love, worship God and proclaim the eternal Love. God's reminder comes: people are not all-knowing, nor all-abled, and in fact are fully known before God who knows humanity and its sin through and through. [2] Indeed, despite any abilities or disabilities the call from God is to nurture. We are, in the church, to nurture the community -- the Body of Christ -- and individual hearts, minds and spirits just as God has given them to each person, no matter how abled.

This does not mean that we are all the same or equal in abilities or gifts. That remains a human focus. Humanity is called to turn the focus to God and what God has done. God created all people for God's purpose and as equal in God's image, [3] saved us from the power of sin and death, [4] and all are individually gifted through the Holy Spirit to carry out God's will in the world. [5] Every ability and disability is an opportunity to turn away from self toward God, to receive God's startling grace and to communicate God's miraculous grace. [6]

FOOTNOTES

- [1]Edelman, *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*. The greater community of faith was very important to Edelman. In her childhood a sense of community is something she notes as formative for her. In this community, one child's accomplishments gave joy to all, neighbors took care of each other and parents instilled a sense of responsibility in their offspring.
- [2] Gen 3:9-13; [3] Gen 1:27; [4] Rom 4:24-25, Rom 5:8-11.;
- [5] 1 Cor 12:1-31; [6] Richardson, "God in our Flesh: Body Theology and Religious Education," 92-94.

ORGANIZATION NEWS

Old Friends

By Ellie Reed, Coordinator

Old Friends will meet the second Thursday of the month, February 9th at 1:30 in the chapel weather permitting. We had a good turnout in January and just enjoyed being together. It is a time when we catch up on what our folks out there are doing.

Lois Manifold was the winner of a spring daffodil plant. The other winner of a gift donated by Doris Dunn from her Senior Center shop was Dot Sunnenberg. Hod did a great job on the guitar.

I had the opportunity to visit four people over ninety this week who really are connected to the church. Opal Howard enjoys the Epistle and hearing from the Sunday school children, and boy scouts. Kay Sheppard goes to church by seeing Sunday services on TV. She enjoys reading devotional material and has just discovered doing word search puzzles that keep her busy. Helen A. Mason told me she had 30 years of perfect attendance at Sunday School. With the help of magnifying glasses, she reads large print Guide Post devotionals, and has church service by herself on Sunday. Mildred Stephens showed me two books on geneology she has been working on the last few months. She must work from dawn to dusk every day as they are so complete. She has places, names, dates all in the right order.

If you would enjoy getting to meet some of the folks that sit near you in church that you never really get acquainted with, Old Friends is the place to come. Remember bring your own lunch. Drinks will be furnished. Hope to see you there.

St. Paul Pre-School

By Karen Rieman, Director

5 Pretty Valentines

- 5 pretty valentines waiting at the store. Mrs. Ehrhardt bought one and then there were four.
- 4 pretty valentines shaped just like a V. Mrs. Warman bought one and then there were three.
- 3 pretty valentines that say I Love You. Mrs. Staudigel bought one and then there were two.
- 2 pretty valentines that say this is so much fun. Mrs. Thinnes bought one and then there was one.
- 1 pretty valentine sitting on the shelf. Mrs. Angst felt sorry for it so she bought it herself.

February is the month of Valentines' Day.

*Love isn't put in our hearts to stay.
Love isn't love till you give it away!*

* **SAVE THE DATE:** Nursery School Carnival, Saturday, March 24th, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

Women of St. Paul

February 14, 2012 (Tuesday)

“Eating Out With Friends”

12:00 p.m.

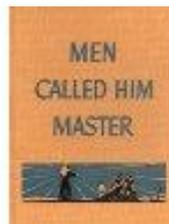
Lunch at Lake Nina - Groesbeck

(Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. if you wish to carpool.)

Devotions

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Reviewed by Evelyn Osterbrock



Men Called Him Master

Authored by Elwyn Allen Smith

This particular book depicts the life of Jesus' disciples' conversations with one another and with their Master (Jesus).

The story begins with John the Baptist in the wilderness where from a high hill, Andrew and John looking down upon the scene, recognize a stranger, stepping into the baptismal waters.

The end chapter is also unusual, and I suspect might be surprising to many of us. The chapters themselves are like living sequential episodes in the lives of Jesus and his twelve disciples. The reactions of the public are both possible and believable. The settings are like backdrops in a stage production. The entire story speaks to us. Hopefully, we have an answer!

*There are scriptural references for the entire story following the last chapter.

Editor's Note: For all those ebook readers, Men Called Him Master can be downloaded free of charge at: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/19190.

MEMORY OF TIME

A True Story

A battalion of soldier boys had been given copies of the Bible, the New Testament and the Old Testament. They were then given strict orders that each was to use the Bible at the service on Sunday.

The following Sunday, while the soldiers were at service, the officer of the day made an inspection and found that one soldier had not brought the new Bible, so he was searched and the only thing that was found in his pocket was a deck of cards. He was reprimanded and then asked if he had anything to say in his own defense. This is the way her replied: "Sir, this pack of cards means a great deal in my life and tells me what is in the Bible, and even more for

The One-spot - - tells me that there is but one God.

The Two-spot - - tells me that the Bible is divided into two parts, the Old and the New Testament.

The Three-spot - - that there are three persons in the Holy Trinity.

The Four-spot - - that the New Testament was written by

The Five-spot - - that there are five foolish and five wise virgins.

The Six-spot - - that the world was created in six days.

The Seven-spot - - that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath on which I must pay my respect to my Creator.

The Eight-spot - - it reminds me of the eight righteous persons that were saved when God destroyed the world, namely, Noah and his wife with the three sons and their wives.

The Nine-spot - - tells me of the nine lepers who did not return to the Saviour to give thanks.

The Ten-spot - - reminds me of the Ten Commandments which I must keep to save my soul.

The Jack - - is the Knave, the devil who goes about seeking destruction of souls.

The Queen - - is the Mother of Heaven the Mother of God.

The King - - is the Kingdom of Heaven which will be my reward of a good life.

Even more than this pack of cards is also an almanac for me, there are 52 cards in the deck, telling me there are 52 Sundays in the year. Add up all the spots and you will find 365 in all, telling me there are 365 days in the year. There are thirteen cards to the suit, which tells me there are thirteen lunar months in the year. In all, there are 12 face cards and so there are 12 months in the year. There are four various suits; hearts, diamonds, spades and clubs, signifying the four seasons of the year; spring, summer, autumn and winter. There are light and dark cards, telling me that each twenty-four hours is divided into day and night.

This is the meaning of the pack of cards to me. I have nothing more to say."

The soldier boy was forthwith honorably discharged.

* Many thanks to Alice Blum for submitting this article.

Blazing, serene hope

Corazon Aquino, who served as president of the Philippines from 1986-1992, faced many difficulties and obstacles. Her husband was assassinated in 1983, and during her presidency, her country experienced numerous major natural disasters.

But Aquino ably saw the Philippines through these trials, earning many awards and much praise for her leadership.

Aquino's attitude wasn't one of meek forbearance until troubles dissipated. "Faith is not simply a patience that passively suffers until the storm is past," she said. "Rather, it is a spirit that bears things - with resignations, yes, but above all, with blazing, serene hope."

- taken from The NEWSLETTERNewsletter.com

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

In Loving Memory of Henry Reed

M/M Len Cooper	Mrs. Marge Irej
M/M Steve Fassnacht	Mrs. Sue Pelton
Mrs. Alice Graber	Mrs. Anne Timme

COMING UP

February 12, 2012

Abbreviated church service - Maybe (?????)

It's *Great Stone Soup Time!*

We will congregatę in Fellowship Hall

All TOGETHER as ONE

Purpose: Make Valentines for those who cannot attend church services.

Each attendee will make a valentine

(Directions Included)

while enjoying "stone soup", and

"snowball crackers".

Get those "veggie" soup recipes into

Lois in the church office.

Watch your Sunday Bulletins

There's more to come.

Did you know....

The Family Life Center in Finneytown provides Free Support Groups and Community Seminars provided through Northminster Presbyterian Church. Please see the brochure in the Narthex and on the bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall for information for January – August of 2012.

We wish a very Happy Birthday to....

February

2/2 Faye Blum	2/12 Erma Amrein
Eileen Church	2/14 Bonnie Rogers
2/4 Geraldine Cooper	Pat Sutton
Larry Zeinner	2/15 Kim Ferry
2/5 Herman Schlegel	Patrick Lewis
2/6 Lois Manifold	Taylor Sharpshair
Vicki Celenza	2/19 Helen A. Mason
2/7 Sarah Krebs	2/20 Sandy Schneeman
Alfred Molter	2/25 Dotty Sunnenberg
2/9 Mandi Cornish	2/26 Myrlee Sheward
2/10 Dottie Mayer	2/27 Gloria Gruttke
2/11 Robert Nungester	2/28 Luke Jensen

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Vicki Prather	Frank Lienhart
Michael Chalfin	Sue Johnson
Kay Sheppard	Carol Rhyner
Naomi Blum	Nan Grow
Bob Jensen	Lee Suman
Jim Rogers	Adam Ballman
Danny Kelly	Marian Faller
Joan Mohr	Imre Forbes
The Sess family	Stefani Stephens
Ann Schnee	Laura Bierkan
Margaret (LeVallee)	Trish Richards
Shirley Stephens Resi	Paul Nuckols
Jordan Ribariu	Vicki Sweat
Bill Lienhart	Evelyn Kamleiter
Debbie Renfro	Kathryn O'Connor Kuhn
Michele Nuckols	John Kluesener
Kim Caudell	Joe Packer
Debbie Holstagge	Elizabeth Kuhlman
Gladys Elsasser	Baby grandson of the Hahn's
Dottie Mayer	Cherrie Lowes
Ed Sharpshair	Donna Schlegel
Myrlee Sheward	Wayne Schleutker
Cindy Fields	Rev. Rick Shonkwiler
Charlene Bracker	The Osterbrock family
Gary Engel	The Strecker family
Bonnie Schwab	Carol Sharp
Ina T. Ames	Elaine Perdue, cousin of Alice Blum
Bob Samad	Bill Eschenbrenner, cousin of Alice Blum
Sarah Sheers	
Gay Steinhauer	Carolyn Kemper
Anne Elsasser	Our servicemen/women

LIVING AND LEARNING

By Pastor Will

When Moses appeared before the pharaoh, demanding that the Egyptian god-king “Let my people go,” Moses threw down the staff in pharaoh’s face and it was miraculously transformed into a snake.

Some of the servants and royal attendants gasped in amazement but one group of onlookers were bored. The royal magicians. They snickered and dismissed the snake incident as a basic parlor trick. Trained magicians-whether in the court of Ramses or on stage at Las Vegas are the last people to actually “believe” in magic, miracles or any other kind of paranormal activity. Magicians know too much. They know “magic” are tricks and techniques, smoke and mirrors.

As each new plague swept over the land it was explained away by Pharaoh’s all-knowing magician-advisors. After all, they knew everything there was to know about magic. Unfortunately for all of Egypt’s first-borns, they knew nothing about God. What do we really know?

If you have ever been involved in teaching, whether it is history to a room full of bored eighth graders, or teaching dog obedience to a bunch of frisky pups or teaching Lenten Studies, you quickly come to one conclusion: the more you try to become learned, the more you define yourself as a learner.

Jesus didn’t choose a bunch of know-it-alls, super smarty scholars as companions. Jesus was a Rabbi (teacher) and those who Jesus taught were called disciples (students). When Jesus gave the Great Commission to the disciples He called them to claim their status as life-long learners to pass the love for learning to the world. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” (Matthew 28:19)

A call to discipleship is a call to enroll more and more people in “Jesus school”-a school from which none of us will ever graduate in this lifetime. An old Hasidic custom has a child’s first Torah teacher drop honey on the first page of the new student’s book. The student then licks the honey off the page when they turn the page. The sweetness of the honey is forever linked with the act of learning. The sweetness of learning then becomes a lifelong craving. The good news is that we are getting smarter about how uneducated we are.

Isaiah cautioned the Israelites not to think they had God all figured out. It is a caution that we need to take seriously today. Instead of a triumphant return to power and an end of their physical and political exile, Isaiah offers the image of a suffering servant. Instead of judgment for the wicked, a come-uppance for those who had embraced the gods of their captors, Isaiah revealed a divine invitation to a new table, a table flowing with water and wine free for the taking. Instead of judgment and punishment, Isaiah promised God’s mercy and pardon. How do we understand the rules and regulations of such a God?

God created us, gave us life, the world and a Garden of Eden and one rule. We broke Rule One. Then came truth or consequences, the consequences of our choice. We were kicked out of paradise, out of a perfect relationship with God.

New Rule: God establishes a covenant with Abraham and all of Abraham’s descendants. Eventually Abraham did well on the many descendants part of the divine deal, but following one God was a rule easily and repeatedly broken.

New Rule: A longer list of rules, hand-delivered by Moses. These rules seemed designed to provide an answer to every possible situation that people might encounter. But just more rules made more rules to break.

New Rule: A king and a kingdom were established by God’s covenant with David and all of David’s descendants. But David’s house became a badly developed subdivision. The mortgage was taken over by the Assyrians, the Persians, the Babylonians and the Romans.

New Rule: Rules don’t work. Instead of rules that establish the way to stay in relationship with God and creating a pathway that will enable rule-breakers-that is all of us-to find a way back into relationship with God.

Isaiah first revealed the cost of the construction of this road back when he named the suffering servant. The bond for this project came due and Jesus paid the price in full on Calvary. Instead of a whole new set of rules, Jesus left us with only one rule, only one way to respond to God’s gift. Love. Not a rule but a relationship.

God’s ways are not our ways. God’s thoughts are not our thoughts. God does not expect God-like comprehension from us. Instead of big ideas and new knowledge, instead of cosmic insight and heavenly perspective, God requires only one response from us: Love.

Mother Theresa put it like this: “It is a mistake to demand clarity of God. I have made understanding an idol. Loving God supersedes knowing God.” That’s why the old song, “To know, know, know Him is to love, love, love Him..” is less true for the Christian than another song that has yet to be written: “To love, love, love Him is to know, know, know Him...” Disciples of Jesus don’t know, to love. Disciples of Jesus love, to know.

Jesus wants to be our teacher. Come, sit at Jesus’ feet and learn.

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MEETING
November 21, 2011

Present: Rick Davis, Rev. Will Stackhouse, Don Beresford, Lois Manifold, Jan Apro, Vicky Ritz, Linda Woods,
Nancy Ballman, Ryan Davis

Council President, Rick Davis, opened the meeting at 7:10 PM with a prayer. The minutes of the October 17, 2011 meeting were reviewed by Council. A MOTION was made (Manifold/Ritz) to approve the minutes. The MOTION PASSED and the minutes were approved as printed.

Treasurer's Report (Don Beresford)

- The Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual statement were reviewed by Council.
- Council discussed with Don the different numbers and where we need to budget better.
- YTD net loss is \$100,000/ That is \$47,000 more loss than what was projected for the budget.

TEAM REPORTS

Sr. Minister's Report (Rev. Will Stackhouse)

- Advent preparations are complete. This Sunday begins the Season of Advent (the beginning of the church's liturgical calendar). The color for this season is purple and signifies the royalty of the Christ Child. In more recent times, the new color for Advent is a light blue color signifying hopefulness. We are not changing right now, but may in the future.
- On the Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 18th, a program has been planned for those who are unable to drive after dark and still would like to hear the Christ Story in a bright and vivid fashion. A monologue version of the Christmas Story will be read and costumed participants will walk from the back of the church to the chancel area in silent motion to reenact the event.
- Christmas Eve Service (Saturday) includes readings by different people who would have been at the Christmas scene. Scripture readers are Jan Apro and Vicki Celenza. Reading the part of Joseph is Bill Gruttke. The part of Mary is read by Joan Allen. The Innkeeper is shared by Evelyn Osterbrock. The part of the Shepherd Child is read by Mandi Cornish and the part of the Wise Men is Dick Manifold. There will be a choral anthem and carols as well as our traditional candle lighting service.
- Since Christmas falls on Sunday (and the choir will not be singing), we will use that time for singing Christmas carols with a few hymn histories thrown in.
- Advent Candle Readers for 2011 are: Paul and Lynn Kluesener, Jan and Nola Apro, Bruce and Diane Banker, Howard and Dawn Page and Judith Lewis Combs.
- The Contemporary Service is being advertised more in the Sunday Bulletin, the Epistle and outside signage. Teri is making a flyer for distribution at the Community Dinner. We picked up two people who heard about it there. Jan suggested advertising on TV through him.
- Pastor Will wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year on behalf of himself and his family.

Care Team

No Report

Nurture Team (Linda Woods)

- Linda reported her team didn't meet this month - no updates.

Welcome Team (Lois Manifold)

- December 18th is the Christmas Cookie Sale.
- Everything is working out well on her team.

Worship Team (Vicky Ritz)

- Vicky reported that she purchased new Advent candles and also plastic candle holders for the choir for Christmas Eve Service (so they won't get any wax on their robes).
- This Sunday, we will be decorating the church. We will have a potluck lunch.

Finance Team (Rick reporting for Mike Bartholomew)

- The Stewardship Drive is seeing some success. The pledges are coming in, and individual pledges appear higher than last year. Thanks to Margaret Maybury for the work she's doing to log the pledges and have them ready to enter into the computer. This year, confirmations to each pledge will go out to make sure we have them recorded correctly as we move forward.
- Don Beresford has received the information required from our financial advisor, the banks and Jan Apro, in order to move forward with reviewing the church mortgage issues. Mike will meet with Don this week and throughout the month to formulate the materials into a strategy to bring to the Executive Board, Council and ultimately the congregation in January.
- Gift card sales are doing well. Keep pushing their use.
- It has been suggested that we sell the professional drum set that has been stored in the closet in the storage room down off the nursery hallway - possibly Craig's List or Ebay?
- Mike has reviewed the UCCE-giving electronic giving start-up packet from Vanco Services, LLD. Vanco is the company chosen by the UCC as a partner in offering UCCE-giving. They have the least expensive overall package he has seen. The next step will be to approach our bank to finalize discussions of fees and charges associated with accepting credit and/or debit cards and checks (both electronic and paper). This will be presented in Council in January.
- A Building Use Fee Schedule is still in the works with Jan Apro.
- Next Finance Team meeting is TBD in December.

Facilities Team (Ryan Davis)

- Local 12 will announce church closings for inclement weather.
- The Scouts may be doing some more work on the church grounds. Rick walked the grounds with Jim Maybury and went over different things.
- Jan looked into another company regarding elevator maintenance. He will give the information to Facilities.
- The door knob to the Ladies Room by Fellowship Hall is fixed.
- Lois reported a faucet problem
- Need to school Jim on emergency generator.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Rick checked with the school's Art Department about painting a mural on the retaining wall (as discussed at last Council meeting). They want to do this.
- Rick sent a letter to the school's Athletic Director (Jamie Mahaffey) about problems with bread on the field after the Community Dinner.
- There will be no meeting in December. The Christmas Party will probably be in January on a Friday night.
- Pastor Will needs sinus surgery in the beginning of December. The 2nd Sunday in Advent, Teri will preach but he will do Communion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Ballman, Secretary

Clergy

Senior Minister: *Rev. Dr. Will Stackhouse*

Church Council

Officers

<i>Rick Davis</i>	President
<i>Jan Apro</i>	Vice President
<i>Nancy Ballman</i>	Secretary
<i>Mike Bartholomew</i>	Finance

Members

<i>Ryan Davis</i>	Facilities Team Leader
<i>Marge Fassnacht</i>	Care Team Leader
<i>Lois Manifold</i>	Welcome Team Leader
<i>Vicky Ritz</i>	Worship Team Leader
<i>Linda Woods</i>	Nurture Team Leader



Organizations and Ministries

Chancel Choir	<i>Rick Tallarigo</i>
Crafty Critters	<i>Diane Banker</i>
Handbell Choir	<i>Howard Page</i>
Health Ministries	<i>Linda Woods</i>
Hospital Callers	<i>Alice Graber</i>
Kitchen Team	<i>Sonya Heitman</i>
Old Friends	<i>Ellie Reed</i>
Prayer Chain	<i>Evelyn Osterbrock</i>
Pre-School	<i>Karen Rieman, Director</i> <i>Lynn Kluesener, Liaison</i>
Scouting	<i>Judith Lewis-Combs, Liaison</i>
Sunday Church School	<i>Evelyn Osterbrock</i>
TRI-F	<i>Carolyn Dykes</i>
Women of St. Paul	<i>Lois Bates</i>

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others..." -1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)



Our Mission

What we are: A body of believers who worship and fellowship together, honoring and glorifying God, while seeking to carry forward the ministry and mission of our Saviour Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Our mission is: To seek the fullness of our Creator's grace, to strive always to walk together in God's way, and to invite others to join with us in ministering to our community and the world.

We believe in:

- God the Creator of all that is and Jesus Christ as the sole Head of the Church and the Holy Spirit as our Guardian, Guide, and Stay.
- A ministry of all believers, one to another, in the spirit of love.
- Creative worship that praises God and lifts the human spirit.
- Education that is transforming – knowledge of the Bible, the human self and the world.
- Open communication, teamwork, and mutual respect.
- Fellowship that binds us together as we face the challenges and opportunities that lie before us.

Adopted by Church Council on
September 18, 1995



FEBRUARY 2012

St. Paul United Church of Christ
 6997 Hamilton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45231
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 email: office@stpaulnch.com; website: www.stpaulnch.com

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5 Communion Scout Sunday 9:50 AM Trad. Worship 10:00 AM Contemporary Worship 11:15 AM Choir Rehearsal Coffee Hr. - Nurture Team	6 5:30 PM Nurture Mtg 6:30 PM Scouts	7 Nursery School Tall Tales Event 4:15 PM Bible Study 5:00 PM Community Dinner	8	9 12:30 PM Old Friends	10 Nursery School 4s Valentine Celebration	11 8:00 PM AA
12 9:50 AM Trad. Worship 10:00 AM Contemporary Worship 11:15 AM Choir Rehearsal Stone Soup Event 7:00 PM Scouts Pack Mtg	13 6:30 PM Scouts	14 12:00 PM Women of St. Paul Nursery School 3s & PreK Valentine Celebration 4:15 PM Bible Study 5:00 PM Comm. Dinner	15	16 10:00 AM Staff Mtg	17	18 8:00 PM AA
19 9:50 AM Trad. Worship 10:00 AM Contemporary Worship 11:00 AM Healing Service 11:15 AM Choir Rehearsal Coffee Hr. - S. Schneeman	20 Presidents' Day No Nursery School 6:30 PM Scouts	21 4:15 PM Bible Study 5:00 PM Community Dinner	22 Ash Wednesday Nursery School Zoo Exhibit Event 7:00 PM Worship	23	24 All Day OES Dinner Preparation	25 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM } OES Dinner 8:00 PM AA
26 1st Sunday in Lent 9:50 AM Trad. Worship 10:00 AM Contemporary Worship 11:15 AM Choir Rehearsal Coffee Hr. - TRI-F	27 6:30 PM Scouts	28 4:00 PM Lenten Study 5:00 PM Community Dinner 7:00 PM Lenten Study	29			



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL



St. Paul United Church of Christ
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E-mail: office@stpaulnch.com

Office Hrs: 9:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. Mon.– Friday

Church Staff:

Dr. Will Stackhouse, Senior Minister

Evelyn Osterbrock, Minister to Children

Rick Tallarigo, Organist/Interim Music Director

Lois Singleton, Office Administrator

Jim Maybury, Sexton

Don Beresford, Treasurer

Parish Nurses: Vicki Celenza, R.N., Coordinator
Roxanne Reed, R.N.

Nursery School Staff: Karen A. Rieman, Director
Christine Angst, Susan Ehrhardt, Judy Staudigel, Cheri Thinnes, Cindy Warman

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