

St. Paul's Epistle

~ An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples ~

Volume 31, Issue 12



December, 2008

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

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Elida, OH 45807

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Rev. Ruth Solo

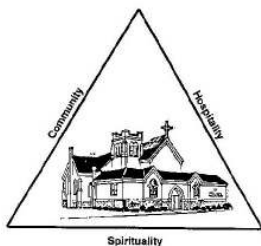
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www.elidastpaulschurch.org



Dear Friends,

As we look around us, it's obvious that the holiday season is here. Stores began to put out decorations before the Halloween costumes were gone. The towns, villages and cities have already put out their banners and lights boasting "Happy Holidays" and "Merry Christmas" along the streets. Those communities where there are people of the Jewish faith also add, "Happy Hanukkah." Our culture looks forward to these celebrations with roots in the religious traditions of God's people.

Our Christian faith will once again celebrate the incarnation of God in a babe in a manger, something that few other traditions can understand, since the deity is to be of royalty and exalted from birth. But, we will sing the songs of exaltation, and remember the story of the angels from heaven giving glory to God in the highest heaven for daring to enter into the life of human beings. And, we'll recall once again that God came not into a palace, but into a stable, where the first to believe the message of the angels and go worship the Son of God were lowly shepherds, the common people.

If we take away all of the pomp and circumstance that we've put around the holiday, all the gift wrap and trees, all the lights and parties, we'd still have Christmas. Because, Christmas (Christ-celebration) happens each time that God is born into a human heart that has fallen away, and all the heavenly host sing praise and glory to God. "For there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who repent" [Luke 15:7]. May each of you have a very Merry Christmas and know the blessings of God's gift in Jesus.

*Peace,
Pastor Ruth Solo*

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Thought for the Month:

The reason angels can fly is that they take themselves lightly.

~ G. K. Chesterton



Christmas Caroling
6:00 PM

Meet at the church
5:30 PM

December Youth Calendar	
December 7, 2008	Fundraiser Dinner
December 14, 2008	Christmas Caroling
December 19, 2008	Christmas Party
December 21, 2008	No Youth
December 28, 2008	No Youth

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's



**Christmas Eve
Candlelight
Service**
10:30 PM



St. Paul's Epistle	
is published by St. Paul's United Methodist Church	
Subscription Rate: NONE	
Editor:	Judy Chaffins
Secretary:	Gail Fessler
Secretary:	Jone Lane
Music Director:	Mary Kaye Pease
Organist:	Linda Holman
Pianist:	Lois Cook
Youth Director:	Doug Fox
Custodian:	Dave Decker

Holiday Home Walk
Tuesday, December 9, 2008
5:30 PM Fellowship Hall
Light Supper

6:00 PM Home Tours Begin

- 1) Jan Wyant's Home
- 2) Sandra Parker's Home
- 3) Phyllis Hines's Home
- 4) Tracy Sdao's Home

**Join us for an evening of fun,
food & fellowship!**

December 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

*Newsletter
deadline:
the 20th*



Growing Disciple Makers

910 E. Third St., Ottawa, OH 45875
 Telephone: 419.523.9901 / 800.589.7828
 Fax: 419.523.3479
 Email nwplains@wocumc.org

Support the United Methodist Children's Home

On the next 5th Sunday, November 30, please give just five dollars to help children at the United Methodist Children's Home in Worthington, Ohio.

Cridersville UMC Christmas Cookie Walk

Christmas Cookie Walk and Gift Wrapping Service

Saturday, December 6, 8:30—11:30 AM

Purchase your favorite home-made Christmas cookies by the pound. Gift wrapping service is available on the same day—same place—same time. Your gifts can be wrapped while you wait— or you may return later. Gift wrapping supplies provided. Donations will benefit Lima's Samaritan House.

Cridersville UMC is located at
 105 Shawnee Rd.
 Cridersville, OH.

United Methodist Student Day Sunday, November 30, 2008

United Methodist Student Day calls the Church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. Every year we hear: Tuition costs are increasing. For many United Methodist students, the continuous increase places an enormous financial burden that many cannot assume. However, through the United Methodist Student Day offering, we can prepare students to unite faith with knowledge.

Each year, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry awards scholarships and loans to students attending United Methodist and other accredited colleges and universities through the United Methodist Student Day offering. Invest in the future of our church through the United Methodist Student Day offering. We can help students unite faith with knowledge.

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| December 9 | Holiday Home Walk Tour
Meet at 5:30 in the church basement |
| December 14 | Christmas Cantata
10:30 AM
Cookie Exchange |
| December 14 | Christmas Caroling
Meet at 5:30 PM |
| December 24 | Gathering Music for Worship
Service—10:10 PM
Candlelight Service—10:30 PM |
| December 31 | Journey's (Young Adult Class) New Year's Eve Party
9:00 PM in Fellowship Hall |



Family Promise will be back at Immanuel UMC December 7—14. They will need some folks to volunteer. Please call the office if you would like to help. Pastor Ruth will need to know who is volunteering and for what.

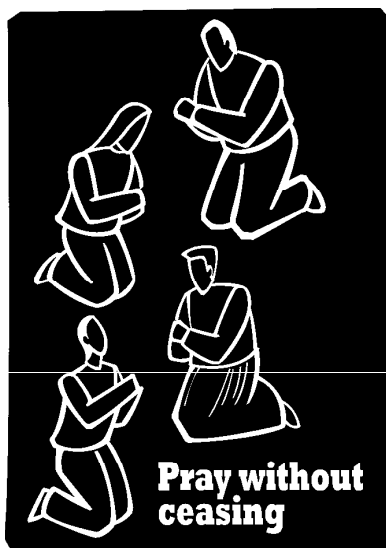
The Heart of Church

Greeters

December 7	Ruth Burgoon & Susan Nartker
December 14	Brian & Angie Nartker
December 21	Dorothy Banks & Judy Strayer
December 28	Evelyn Sarber & Glenna Kohli

Nursery Volunteers

December 7	Gloria Brunk & Jacinda Fletcher
December 14	Brian & Angie Nartker and Jacinda Fletcher
December 21	Slone Nagy
December 28	Julia Adkins



The new minister was intrigued to see an announcement in the church newsletter for a “Greening of the Church” service in early December.

“Do you mean a Hanging of the Greens?” the minister asked.

“Yes,” came the reply. “But we changed the name after the Green family complained.”

The road to enlightenment is long and difficult . . . try not to forget snacks and magazines.

~ Anne Lamott, quoting Rick Fields

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side of it. The six-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, “Good morning, Alex.” “Good morning, Pastor,” he replied, still focused on the plaque. “Pastor, what is this?” The Pastor said, “Well son, it’s a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service.” Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Alex’s voice, barely audible and trembling with fear asked, “Which service, the 8:30 or the 10:30?”

Children’s Worship (Conducted During the Worship Hour)

1st Sunday of Each Month	Pastor Ruth—Story
2nd Sunday of Each Month	Steve Moser—Story Slone Nagy—Children’s Church
3rd Sunday of Each Month	Pastor Ruth—Story Angie & Brian Nartker—Children’s Church
4th Sunday of Each Month	Corinne Piper—Story & Children’s church

Book of Timothy



The Business of Church

The Finance Committee is working on implementing a voucher system to pre-approve any expenditures \$25.00 and over. Every committee chair and their helpers would need to have the voucher signed before they make the purchase. The voucher would need to be signed by Pastor Ruth or an assigned Trustee.

The village of Elida is planning an Historical Celebration on July 14th, 2009. We have been asked to participate in the celebration. Anyone interested in being part of the planning for this celebration contact Brian Nartker as soon as possible, so Brian can inform the Village office. They would like to know by mid-December if we plan to participate. Let's celebrate being a part of our Elida Community!!!



Commitment Sunday

57 giving units have pledged \$146,684 for 2009.

33 of those units increased their pledge over their 2008 pledge.

The pledges so far for 2009 represent a twelve percent increase over 2008.

The total income for our general operating budget during the last twelve months was \$149,635.

Thank you, St. Paul's members and friends!



Carol Grapner reports the results of the Commitment Pledges during the luncheon on November 9th.



Committee Chairs

PPR Chair	Linda Craft
Trustees Chair	Jamie Wyant
Finance Chair	Art Holman
Physical Plant Chair	Ron Steiner
Treasurer	Gene Craft
Education Chair	Corinne Piper
Ad. Council Chair	Tim Piper
Worship	Ruth Solo
Nurture	Gail Fessler
Stewardship	Wilbur Hurd
Missions	Ruth Solo

Faith In Action

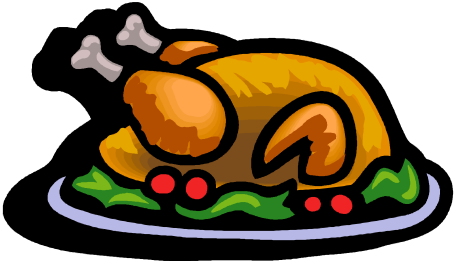
Worship Attendance:

November 2, 2008	117
November 9, 2008	121
November 16, 2008	131
November 23, 2008	115

Financial Giving
Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$3,466.00



Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
Nov. 2, 2008	\$4,290.00	\$999.43
Nov. 9, 2008	\$3,795.00	\$1,095.00
Nov. 16, 2008	\$4,126.00	\$354.00
Nov. 23, 2008	\$2,952.53	\$729.10



A three year old once gave this reaction to her Christmas dinner:
"I don't like the turkey, but I like the bread he ate."

God, I can push the grass apart
and lay my finger on thy heart.
— Edna St. Vincent Millay

Sunday School Attendance

November 2, 2008	49
November 9, 2008	32
November 16, 2008	34
November 23, 2008	38

Flowers:

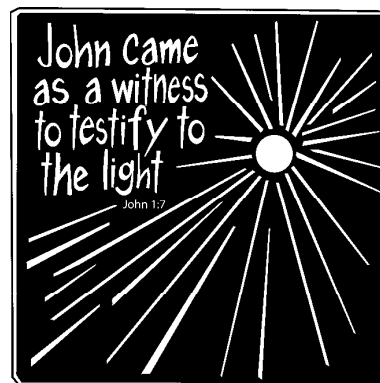
December 7, 2008	Dan & Margie Best
December 14, 2008	Poinsettias
December 21, 2008	Poinsettias
December 28, 2008	Virginia Hollar

**Visit The United
Methodist Website at:
www.umw.org**

Consulting the Manual



Christ is born in Bethlehem



Bible Readings for December

Revised Common Lectionary
Year B

Week of December 7 Second Sunday of Advent

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

New Testament:

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

Week of December 14 Third Sunday of Advent

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalms 126

New Testament:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28



Week of December 21 Fourth Sunday or Advent

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

New Testament:

Luke 1:47-55

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

Week of December 28

Color: White or Gold

Old Testament:

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalms 148

New Testament:

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

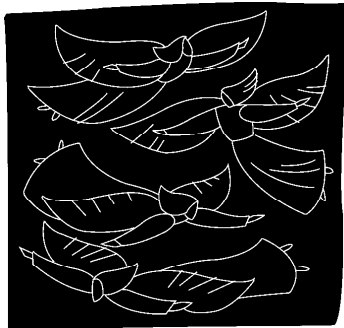


For more detailed information on the
Revised Common Lectionary,
please visit:
www.gbod.org

Contemplating...

December's Coins for Communion will go to support "Heartbeat of Lima". In addition to financial support, Heartbeat welcomes donations of material gifts. Heartbeat allows their clients the opportunity to earn necessary supplies to care for themselves and their babies by attending school, church, parenting classes, financial classes, etc. In December there will be a donation box in the Narthex for St Paul's members to place their new/unused donated items. Suggestions include:

- Baby formula
- Diapers
- Infant clothing, sizes newborn to 2T
- Blankets, bottles, and other layette items
- Maternity Clothes



"The desert hears a lonely voice:
 'Quickly flies the time of choice,
 Repair the roads, straighten the bends;
 Now's your chance to be God's friends;
 down with the mighty, up with the low,
 All living things their God will know.'"

 – Luke 3:4b-6, from *Good As New: a Radical Retelling of the Scriptures* by John Henson

MARY THE PROPHET

The Bible is full of stories of God calling prophets, and their responses. Often, they are reluctant: Moses claimed to be a nobody, Isaiah said, "I am a person of unclean lips," and Jeremiah said, "I am too young."

Yet the prophet Mary not only says "let it be, according to your word" (or, "I'm ready to serve" according to The Message) but bursts into song, proclaiming the goodness of God.

At this time of year, we see Mary a lot, usually dressed in blue, in Christmas cards, manger scenes, and nativity pageants. But do we really notice her? This young, previously unknown teenager from Nazareth made an amazing speech (Luke 1:47-54) and – in addition to birthing the Messiah – did a number of other powerful acts in her life as well.

In the midst of this busy season, pause and pay a little attention to Mary. Read her story, and listen to her challenge.

**We need the power of
 love, not the love of
 power.**

– Anonymous

Don't cry because it's over, but
 smile because it happened.
 – Dr. Seuss

A little child,
 A shining star.
 A stable rude,
 The door ajar.
 Yet in that place,
 So crude, forlorn,
 The Hope of all
 The world was born.

Table Grace
 Grant us, God,
 the grace of giving,
 with a spirit large and free,
 that ourselves
 and all our living
 we may offer faithfully.



Reflecting on an Advent Hymn...

The Season of Advent includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. There are many traditions connected with Advent. The most familiar is that of lighting candles on an Advent wreath.

Another tradition involves singing the verses of the hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" on the seven days before Christmas. The verses were based on ancient prayers known as the "O Antiphons" that were first sung in Latin.

Most modern hymnals contain a version of this hymn, although the number and order of verses sometimes changes, as does the translation. Each verse of this hymn talks about Jesus coming into our world and uses a different name for Jesus.

The words to the hymn are written below. Being very old, they may seem rather strange, so a brief explanation is given for some of the terms, along with a suggestion for reflecting on each verse. Sing a different verse each day of the week for the four weeks of Advent.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Child of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

This verse does not refer to the modern nation of Israel, but to all of God's people (often called "Israel" in the Bible). It asks that Jesus help set people free. Who are people in the world who need to be set free? Where are some places where the good news of God's love that Jesus brings can make a difference?

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and help us in that way to go.**

In the Bible, Wisdom doesn't mean

knowledge or the things we learn from books. Instead, it's when God's Spirit is inside us and helps us know, deep in our heart, what is right and how God wants us to live. Proverbs 8 tells us that Wisdom helped God create the world, and 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Jesus is the Wisdom of God. Talk about something you know by heart.

**O come, O come, O Adonai,
who came to all on Sinai high,
and from its peace a single law
proclaimed in majesty and awe.**

Adonai is a Hebrew word used to refer to the name for God that Moses learned when speaking to God at the burning bush (Ex 3:2). Sinai is the mountain where God gave the torah or law to the people. Reflect on how Jesus helps us learn how to live in God's way.

**O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty
power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.**

Jesse was King David's father. King David was considered a great king who was fair and good and the people longed for a new ruler from the line of David. He was also a shepherd, and Jesus – who was descended from David – showed us that being a shepherd was a wonderful way to be a leader. Who are some people who show servant leadership?

**O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way
that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.**

"Key of David" was a name given to the risen Christ in Revelation 3:7 and celebrated that Jesus was God's Messiah or special, chosen one, who would reconnect us to God when we were separated from God. Think (or talk) about times when you feel cut off

from God and how you have gotten reconnected.

**O come, O Dayspring,
come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
love stir within the womb of night,
and death's own shadows
put to flight.**

Dayspring was an old-fashioned way of meaning "new dawn" which is part of the song of Zechariah in Luke 1:78. Zechariah sang this song to his infant son, John the Baptist, imagining some of the things that Jesus would do. This new dawn would bring about God's mercy, bringing new life, love, and joy upon the earth. How has the birth of Jesus brought joy into your life?

**O come, Desire of nations, bind
in one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our bitter conflict cease,
and be for us our Prince of Peace.**

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a Prince of Peace (9:6) who would come and bring justice and righteousness. Matthew understood that Jesus was this person, and while we do not know if this is who Isaiah meant or not, we do know that the things Jesus taught can help the world to live in peace. How can you help to bring peace in the world?

Emmanuel is one of the names of Jesus (see Mt 1:23). It is sometimes spelled "Immanuel." This is because the word comes from Hebrew, and was originally written in the Hebrew alphabet. It means "God with us" and can be spelled either way.



Charge Conference

St. Paul's U.M.C.
 Nominations and Personnel Report for 2008
 All positions are effective beginning January 1, 2009
 * Persons to be elected.

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

Chairperson Ad. Council	Scott Fessler	(11)
Church Conf./Council Secretary	Gail Fessler	(09)
	Jone Lane	(09)
Chair of Finance	Art Holman	(09)
Christian Education	Steve Moser	(11)
Church Historian	Jone Lane	(09)
Financial Secretary	Carole Grapner	(09)
Higher Education	Lois Cook	(09)
Lay Leader	Dan Best	(10)
Lay Member to Annual Conf.	Lavonne Segovia	(09)
Members-at-large	Norm Grigsby	
	Wilbur Hurd	
Membership	Lavonne Segovia	(09)
Missions	Marty White	(11)
	Maedene Holmes	(11)
Nuture	Martha Vazquez	(11)
Chairperson PPR	Linda Craft	(10)
Chair of Trustees	Jamie Wyant	(09)
Treasurer	Gene Craft	(09)
Youth Director	Doug Fox	
Youth Representative	The Youth (rotating)	
Pastor	Ruth Solo	

NOMINATIONS

Chairperson	Ruth Solo	
Lay Leader	Dan Best	(10)
Fran Hall (09)	Norm Grigsby (10)	Margie Best (11)
Ruth Hardy (09)	Kathy White (10)	Cindy Guess (11)
Molly Fessler (10)	Susan Nartker (10)	Virginia Hollar (11)

PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Linda Craft	(10)
Lay Member	Lavonne Segovia	(09)
Lay Leader	Dan Best	(10)
Karen Bible (09)	Brian Nartker (10)	Linda Craft (11)
Doug Guess (09)	Don Chaffins (10)	Myrna Metzger (11)
Martha Vazquez(09)	Jan Wyant	(11)

What Makes A Person Rich?

One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live. They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them"

The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "Thanks Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing? Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don't have.

Charge Conference

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson	Jamie Wyant	(09)
Vice-Chair of Trustees	Larry Moser	(10)
Treasurer	Art Holman	
Dennis Bowsher (09)	Larry Moser (10)	Gloria Brunk (11)
Jeff Holmes (09)	Mary Irvin (10)	Ron Steiner (11)
Jamie Wyant (09)	Rich Solo (10)	Tim Theodore (11)

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Art Holman	(09)
Chairperson Admin. Council	Scott Fessler	(11)
Assistant Treasurer	Lois Cook	(09)
Financial Secretary	Carole Grapner	(09)
Lay Leader	Dan Best	(10)
Lay Member of Annual Conf.	LaVonne Segovia	(09)
Member-at-large	Norm Grigsby	(11)
PPRC Chair or Rep.	Linda Craft	(09)
Pastor	Ruth Solo	
Permanent Endowment Rep.	Dwain Metzger	(11)
Treasurer	Gene Craft	(09)
Trustee Chair or Rep.	Jamie Wyant	(09)

STEWARDSHIP/MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson	Bill McKinney	(11)
Bill McKinney (09)	Don Irvin	(11)
Dwain Metzger (09)	Evelyn Sarber	(11)
Phyllis Hines (10)	Dillon Staas	(11)
Lay Leader	Dan Best	(10)

PERMANENT ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Dwain Metzger	(11)
	Martha Vazquez	(09)
Trustee Rep.	Jamie Wyant	(10)
Finance Rep.	Art Holman	(09)
Treasurer	Gene Craft	(09)
Pastor	Ruth Solo	

THANKFULNESS

One of the things that I have enjoyed most about our Administrative Council meetings this year is the addition of a part of the meeting that we call "Celebrations". While I would like to take credit for this uplifting part of our meeting it was actually Pastor Ruth who suggested that we add it to our meetings. During the "Celebrations" part of the meeting I ask our council members to list events and happenings of our church that have occurred in the last month in which we can celebrate and praise God. We usually come up with at least a dozen events and sometimes more. In the past month we celebrated: Consecration Sunday, a baptism, tailgate parties, three new choir members, Crop Walk by the youth, overwhelming support of the Food Pantry, volunteering at the soup kitchen, the Lima Area Methodist Men's breakfast, coins

for Communion, a successful stewardship campaign, the leadership dinner, a group attending Charge Conference, book club discussions, and youth participation in church events. No doubt you can think of two or three more "praises" that could be added to this list. While much of the council meeting involves the "business" of our church, the Celebration part involves identifying events that bring us together as God's family. I have noticed that council members enjoy identifying our "praises" for our list. When we take time to list these "praises" we are celebrating and thanking God for our successes in furthering His Kingdom. As we approach the Thanksgiving Holiday amid all of the pre-Christmas hype, we should remember what we are thankful for and the events that bind our souls together as Christians. I leave you with a poem by Helen Keller that I heard last week on WBCL radio. Have a great Thanksgiving!

~ **Tim Piper**

*They took away what
should have been my eyes
(But I remembered
Milton's Paradise).*

*They took away what should
have been my ears,
(Beethoven came and
wiped away my tears).*

*They took away what should
have been my tongue,
(But I had talked with
God when I was young).*

*He would not let them
take away my soul -
Possessing that, I still
possess the whole.*

-Helen Keller

Charge Conference

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Pastor	Ruth Solo
Choir Director	Mary Kaye Pease
Organist	Linda Holman
Pianist	Lois Cook
Secretary	Jone Lane

WORSHIP SETTING

Pastor	Ruth Solo
Alter Guild	Kathy White
Communion Stewards	Brian & Angie Nartker
Ushers	Bill McKinney
Greeter Rep.	Steve Sdao
Musician	Linda Holman
Liturgical Arts	Myrna Metzger

'If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.'
- Ronald Reagan

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Chairperson	Steve Moser (11)	
Youth Director	Doug Fox	
Lois Cook	Steve Moser	Janna Thompson
Gail Fessler	Slone Nagy	Jan Wyant
Shirley Moser	Vicki McAdams	

MISSIONS

Chairpersons	Marty White (11)	
	Maedene Holmes (11)	
Dennis Bowsher	Doug Fox	Tim Piper
Shara Bowsher	Virginia Hollar	Ruth Solo
Audrey Fox	Mike Matlock	Jamie Wyant

NURTURE

Chairperson	Martha Vazquez (11)	
Becky Bean	Shirley Moser	Lois Rabley
Lynda Evans	Brian Nartker	Sue Theodore
At large member		Janet Grigg



Consecration Sunday, November 9, 2008:
We worshiped together led by Reverend David Chivington, Assistant to the District Superintendent. We pledged at the altar out of our blessings. Altogether, a memorable day!



Photos courtesy of Ron Steiner.

Friendship Trip 13 Trip Report

**September 24-October 4,
2008**

FORO Friendship Trip 13 occurred almost exactly six years following the first FORO Friendship trip in September, 2002. Trip 13 revealed significant changes in the orphanages and Russia which require FORO to critically assess its path forward. My overall conclusions are as follows:

With some exceptions, the economic challenges facing the orphanages are much less acute than they were several years ago, and the need for material aid is less significant.

The systemic and deep-rooted challenges facing orphans in general are still present and are more difficult to address.

The changes observed in Russia validate FORO's strategic direction to concentrate efforts on programs that will have a more personal impact on the lives of the children.

FORO should scale back its work at certain locations and concentrate its efforts on the programs and locations where it may be better able to have an impact.

FORO has established warm relations with many individuals and orphanages and the mere fact that FORO has not forgotten them (as was mentioned in

various locations) is meaningful.

Children in the orphanages have a greater opportunity for family life today than in years past due to the emphasis on local Russian adoption and foster care promoted by economic incentives, but this system is still evolving and during this period of change various negative effects have been and continue to occur as well.

FORO has been greatly blessed by the fact that Sara Harris has become our Russia based facilitator. Sara is efficient, organized, astute and credible with the orphanage directors and officials with whom we met. This assistance will be invaluable as we proceed.

*By Lisa Wurster & Rick Lloyd
Daughter of Norm and
Mary Grigsby*



St. Paul's 2008
CHRISTMAS COOKIE
EXCHANGE

Sunday, December 14th

St. Paul's Fellowship Hall
The exchange will occur
immediately
following church service.

Please bring
2-3 dozen cookies.

Family favorites and
original recipes desired.

Drop-off cookies in
Fellowship Hall before
Service.

Take as many cookies
as you bring.

We dined together after declaring our commitment to St. Paul's. The food was catered (& THANK YOU!) by Tony and Pam Lozano and Company in the fellowship hall. It was delicious & the presentation was wonderful! WE ARE BLESSED!!!



Observations...

Hanging of the Greens

A common Advent tradition in the northern hemisphere is known as the Hanging of the Greens. This is an intriguing blend of ancient symbolisms adapted over the years to proclaim a variety of powerful messages.

Ancient Romans used evergreens as symbols of peace, joy, and victory. Their long-lasting color and inherent strength suggested long life and exuberance. Early Christians saw in these same branches a symbol of the risen Christ, and would place evergreen boughs in their windows to symbolize that Christ was present in their home. However, some early Christian leaders condemned the practice, believing that it was too similar to Roman imperial customs.

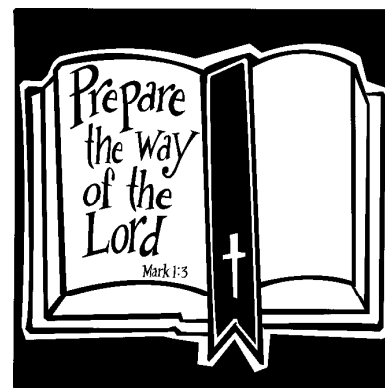
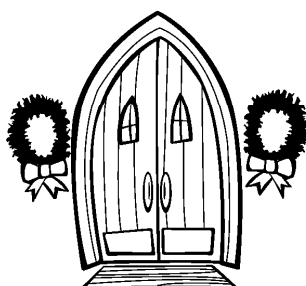
The peoples of Northern Europe had many customs connected with evergreens in the wintertime before Christianity arrived there. In a land of long, cold winters, there was a fear that the sun would disappear and never return. Believing that evergreens held magical powers, people brought them indoors hoping they would help bring back the sun. Over time, the evergreens came to symbolize the presence of

new life of Christ, whose birth was celebrated in the northern winter.

Holly became closely tied to Christmas and Christian symbolism. Some people saw it as a symbolic "burning bush" arriving at the time of year when we celebrated the birth of Jesus, the "new Moses." Others saw it as a symbol of Mary whose being glowed with the presence of the Holy Spirit symbolized by the color red. Still others saw its prickly leaves and red berries as symbols of the crown of thorns and drops of blood. Lest we get carried away in a story of pure joy, the holly tree reminds us of a larger picture.

Cedar in many cultures is a symbol of royalty, and the sweet smell of pine and other evergreens is a reminder of the frankincense brought by the magi.

As churches, homes, and other places get adorned with greenery during Advent and Christmas, look beyond the decorations to the powerful symbolism that can take us ever deeper into the story and mystery that is the birth of Jesus Christ in our world.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The Young Adult Class of St. Paul's UMC (**Journeys**) will be hosting a New Year's Eve Party on **December 31, 2008, at 9:00 PM** in the fellowship hall. This party is open to people of all ages from our community. It will be a night of music, games, snacks, and good fellowship. Please feel free to invite your friends to join you at this night of fun fellowship. More details will be forthcoming as we approach the date.

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS A BLESSING TO MANY

As I drove up to The Church at Allentown last month to deliver the food collected at St. Paul's I noticed the line of people waiting for food was longer than usual, extending all the way into their parking lot. In August and September the supply of food at the Five Loaves Food Pantry, located in the basement of the Allentown church, was nearly wiped out due to large numbers of people in need. Yet, as I entered the basement with our food from St. Paul's the shelves

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The People of St. Paul's

Thank you to everyone for the outpouring of prayers, cards, and visits following my recent surgery.

God has definitely blessed me with a loving and caring church family.

Steve Moser



Food Pantry Sunday this month will be December 14th. Watch the dry erase boards in our entryways for listings of needed food. Cash may also be donated to the Food Pantry by placing cash or a check in an envelope marked "food pantry" and placing it in our offering plate. The cash is used to buy food items whose stock becomes low. Anyone is welcome to volunteer to help at the Five Loaves Food Pantry on the last two Saturdays of each month by contacting Vickie Tooker at 419-233-7471. May God bless everyone at St. Paul's Church who donates food or cash to "feed the five thousand".

~ Tim Piper

(Continued from page 14)

were full of food and they had added a refrigerator for perishable foods! Where did this food come from? Then I remembered Mark 6:40-42:

So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied.



Congratulations to Jennifer and Rodney Bryant on the birth of their daughter, Alexandra Leona Bryant, who was born October 23, 2008, in Philadelphia, PA. Alexandra weighed 8 lbs., 5 oz. Proud grandparents are Jim and Phyllis Hines. Cards may reach Jennifer and Rodney at 706 Juniper Ave., Chester Springs, PA 19425.

Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

- Scott Fessler
- Cindy Guess
- Art Holman
- Hope Mathwig
- June Metzger
- Jean Redd

Homebound Members

- Rebekah Baxter
- Hazel Dunn
- Ruth Hurley
- Marie Lee
- Edna Osman
- Jean Redd
- Gladys Sherrick
- Ray & Helen Waldron

Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

- Dorothy Foster
- Sara House
- June Metzger
- Rick Scholfield

Those in the Military

- Jason Stanley

Visit The United Methodist Communications website : www.umcom.org

This website offers book reviews, music reviews, and web ministry information among other relevant and interesting links.

Connecting With ...

Dear Friends,

Since our daughter died this summer I have had a number of people ask me how we are doing. It is a difficult question and I often pass over it by replying that we are fine. You know, I lie like we Christians are taught. Sometimes I reveal a little bit more of my inner self by saying that I am partially alright. The truth is that you can really know how I am doing by looking at my hands.

As we approach the holidays Carrie's absence from my life is devastating. She was the one that helped me tool up for the season. She loved the gatherings, the shopping, the planning, the cooking and the decorating. There isn't a single part of our family planning and gathering that doesn't cry out, "Where is Carrie?" Her absence has left an unbearable hole in my soul. The holidays make it so obvious.

My relationship with God is affected by this hole. Joy seems fleeting, peace is unknown. Sometimes I read where God answered someone's prayers and I distance myself from God who said "no" to my prayers. I wonder why we were not worthy of God's healing. Anger is my constant companion and if I have too much time to myself I question the point and meaning of everything. My passion for life is gone and I feel like a robot just trying to do the right thing. Like Wesley, I try to do good and do no harm.

When you think like this it is easy to drift into unhealthy God thoughts. We in the church call God thinking, theology. Out of the darkness of this hole in my soul comes a lot of bad theology. I think that prayer doesn't work. God doesn't care. Life is meaningless. It amazes me how often Satan whispers something in my ear and suddenly I question everything that I have preached about for thirty years. But you will never understand the intensity of this theological struggle unless you look at my hands.

My hands are full of splinters. They are there because of how tightly I am hanging on to the cross of Calvary. Each time I hear a whisper that says "God doesn't really care" I hold a little tighter to the old rugged cross. It is here, at the foot of the cross, God made it plain that He does love me. And it is here I cling with all my strength. There is an old Hebrew phrase used in one of their celebrations where they say "Dayenu" which means, "It is enough." I say that a lot now. For if God would do nothing else for me, like answer my prayers, the fact that Jesus died for my sin is enough. *Dayenu*. It is here I stand, or more to the fact, here I cling. Trusting in what I no longer feel. Believing in what is no longer evident. I keep trying to look through the darkness of this hole in my soul to see the face of Jesus hanging on that cross looking down at me saying, "This is how much I love you." *In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine a wondrous*

beauty I see. For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died, to pardon and sanctify me. So I'll cherish the old rugged cross, till my trophies at last I lay down; I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it someday for a crown.

I share all this because I know that others hurt just like me and I am not alone in this struggle of faith. Your holidays are also affected by a dark hole. I hope by sharing my story we can encourage one another to hang in there. Hold on brothers! Hold on sisters! One day we will take our splintered hands and place them in the hands scarred by nails. So, hold on!

*Peace,
Dave*

Rev. David Chivington
Assistant to the
District Superintendent



Prayer List Updates

Please Contact

Lavonne Segovia

Meetings

December 1, 2008
PPR...7:15 PM

December 2, 2008
Trustees...7:00 PM

December 15, 2008
Finance...7:00 PM

December 15, 2008
Ad Council...8:00 PM

December 16, 2008
Missions...7:00 PM

Christian Ed
No Meeting in December

Sundays
Prayer...9:00 AM

Thursdays
Chancel Choir...7:30 PM

December 2008

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1 A.J. White PPR	2 Lavonne Segovia Trustees	3 Mary LaRue 89 yrs. Edna Osmon 95 yrs. Bible Study	4 Choir	5 Shirley Adams Todd Hanes David Segovia	6 Teresa Grigsby Sue Theodore Lisa Wurster
7 Prayer	8	9	10	11 Ron McAdams John Segovia Phyllis Trigg	12	13
14 Prayer	15 Finance Ad Council	16 Missions	17 Audrey Fox Bible Study	18 Pam Gaghen Mary Holmes Choir	19	20 Ruth Burgoon Mary Steiner
21 Prayer	22 Kara Woeller	23 Kayla Stewart	24 Linda Craft	25 Denny Grapner 	26	27
28 Adam Crates Prayer	29 Tammy Segovia	30 Tristan Gaghen	31 			

Anniversaries

- Dennis & Shara Bowsher*
December 19
- Larry & Gloria Brunk*
December 21
40 yrs.
- Larry & Janice Flick*
December 27
41 yrs.
- John & Valerie Kuenzli*
December 27
- Denny & Janna Thompson*
December 29
- Ron & Karen Bible*
December 30
- Michael & Kim Crates*
December 31

Featured Recipes from St. Paul's Cookbook

Delicious Fudge (from 2007 Holiday Home Tour)

by Sandra Parker

Ingredients		Instructions
1 can	evaporated milk	Stir first 3 ingredients on high heat until it begins to boil. Lower heat a couple of notches and set timer for 6 minutes. Stir occasionally. Take off burner immediately after 6 minutes. Add 1 tsp. vanilla and chips. Stir until blended. Pour into a buttered 9 x 13 pan. May use mint or peanut butter chips for different flavor.
5 cups	sugar	
2 sticks	butter	
1 tsp.	vanilla	
3 cups	chips (2 -11 oz. bags)	



Merry Christmas Salad

by Connie Mauch

Ingredients		Instructions
1 pkg.	lime jello	Put package of lime jello in bowl with softened cream cheese and mash with fork until completely blended. Add 1 cup boiling water and 1 cup juice from pineapple. Let set until jelly consistency. Add pineapple, marshmallows and whipped topping. Put in a 9x13 inch dish and refrigerate until firm. Meanwhile, dissolve red jello in cup boiling water. Add 3/4 cup cold water. Let set until jelly-like and pour over set green layer.
1 pkg.	red jello	
1 No. 2 can	crushed pineapple	
1 (3 oz.) pkg.	cream cheese	
1 small	whipped topping	
3/4 pkg.	colored miniature marshmallows	

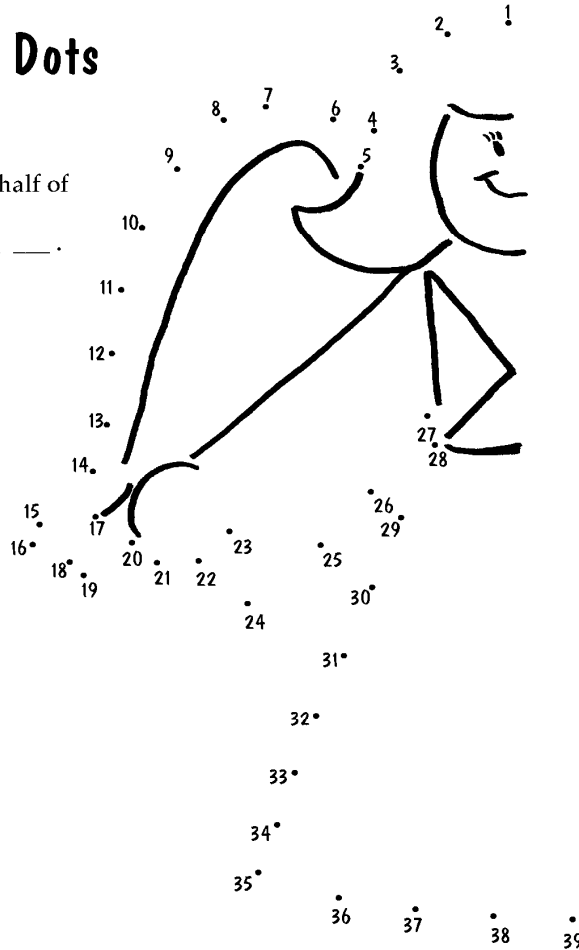


KIDZ KORNER

Connect the Dots

Connect the dots.

Then draw the other half of
this _____.



Angels

Here are some Bible verses that tell us some things that angels have done and can do for us. Can you match the verse and action?

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. Heb 1:14 | a. gave directions to Peter |
| 2. Luke 1:11-20 | b. rolled back the stone |
| 3. Acts 12:7-10 | c. gave instruction to Philip |
| 4. Mat 2:13 | d. spirits in divine service |
| 5. Luke 22:43 | e. appeared as strangers to whom we should show hospitality |
| 6. Mat 28:2 | f. brought good news to Zechariah |
| 7. Acts 8:26 | g. appeared to Jesus and gave him strength |
| 8. Heb 13:2 | h. guard us and bear us up |
| 9. Ps 91:11-12 | i. appeared to Joseph in a dream |

Answers:
1. d 4. i
2. f 5. g
3. a 6. b
4. h 9. h

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807



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espcoffice@embarqmail.com



Living Our Faith

December 2008

Some Christmas superstitions:

- If you refuse a mince pie at Christmas dinner you will have bad luck for the coming day.
- If you eat a raw egg before eating anything else on Christmas morning, you will be able to carry heavy weights.
- A clear star-filled sky on Christmas Eve will bring good crops in the summer.
- A blowing wind on Christmas Day brings good luck.
- In Devonshire, England, a girl raps at the henhouse door on Christmas Eve. If a rooster

crows, she will marry within the year.

- Snow on Christmas means Easter will be green.

Superstitions having to do with shoes:

- Wearing new shoes on Christmas Day will bring bad luck.
- Place shoes side by side on Christmas Eve to prevent a quarreling family.
- In Greece, some people burn their old shoes during the Christmas season to prevent misfortunes in the coming year.



For your ship to
come in,
you must first
build a dock.

– Author unknown