

St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 44 Issue 2

February, 2021

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

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February already, and this month Lent will start on Ash Wednesday, March 17th, and I honestly have no idea what we will be doing. Worship Committee meets this week and as soon as I know what the "official" plan is I will pass it on to you. Be looking for information in the Weekly

Word and announcements during church (in person or online) in the weeks to come.

There has been a lot of discussion around town and around the world about the COVID vaccination and if people are getting it. I know this is a very big decision for everyone. I don't know if I am overstepping my bounds, but as I write this article I am planning on getting the vaccine as soon as I can. I am selfishly going to get the vaccine because it appears to travel on airlines you will soon need to prove you are COVID free, and I want to visit my daughter this year. My kids will probably need to have it to go to school or play high school sports. My hope is, we can eliminate this virus with what they are calling herd immunity. So I can go back to eating out with whomever I please, not wear a mask anywhere, and sing a hymn out loud at church instead of humming it under my mask, but that is only my opinion.

It is amazing how certain events change our lives so drastically and affect not only our nation but our world. World Wars, presidential assassinations, terrorist bombings, and now pandemic disease all have changed our world permanently. Even though evil seems to be the outcome, it always amazes me how humanity rises to the challenge, and good always overcomes evil. Christians have known this since the beginning. God can even use what others mean for harm to accomplish good. Humanity has once again stepped up in the midst of a bad event, and we have shown Christ Love through our actions. We have learned a lot about ourselves in the past twelve months, and I know we will take the good from this pandemic and move forward as children of God serving Christ by loving His world.

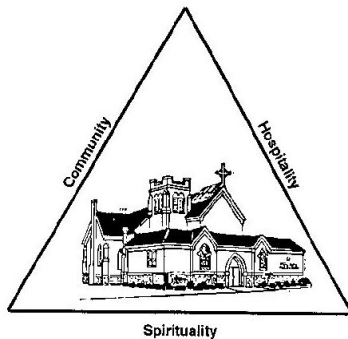
I'll see you out there in the mission field.

Pastor Paul

Thought for the Month:

Is prayer your steering wheel
or your spare tire?

— Corrie Ten Boom



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February 7
'Coins for Communion'
to benefit Samaritans Purse

Transfiguration Sunday
 February 14

Food Pantry Sunday
 February 14
**Non-perishable food items and
 cleaning supplies**

Presidents Day
 February 15

Happy Valentine's Day
 February 14





Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

Newsletter
 deadline:
 the **16th**
 of each month

Christian Symbol

FOUNTAIN

A fountain, or well, symbolizes Jesus, our living water. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that everyone who drinks the water he gives will never thirst again. It "will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life," Jesus said (see John 4:14, NRSV).



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Secretary	Gail Fessler
Newsletter	Jone Lane
Organist	Linda Holman
Pianist	Lois Cook
Choir Director	Judy Chaffins
Custodian	Dave Decker



Ash Wednesday
 February 17
 Details for Ash Wednesday
 Service to be announced.



February 21



February 28



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

*Life is fragile
 handle with Prayer*

A Daily Prayer

Whatever happens today, dear Lord, help us remember that you are present. If we find ourselves in the shadows of disappointment or rejection or pain, let us see your comforting light. If we're in the radiant light of success or acceptance or wholeness, may we acknowledge your providence and grace. Wherever we are, grant us the assurance of your nearness. Amen.



Prayer

STANDING IN THE GAP

Last month, I mentioned a book on prayer that I have rediscovered, Intimate Intercession, by Tricia McCary Rhodes and that it had begun to renew my intentions about praying for others. The thoughts and ideas that I share are taken from this book.

The Scriptures are full of stories about people praying for others: safety, freedom, wives, husbands, children, food, health and all the other things we need every day. Those people we read about weren't afraid to ask God for anything and not just ask but ask with expectation of results. But is there a difference between asking and praying and just making someone's needs known?

To Rhodes, the difference is that we "stand in the gap". When Scripture talks of a gap or a breach, it refers to something that is no longer as it ought to be. God made a covenant between the people of Israel and Himself, which the Israelites promptly broke, there was a gap between them and God. God told Moses these stubborn people would be destroyed and He and Moses would start again.

BUT, Moses loved the Israelites stuck and pleaded with the Lord to have mercy. He stood in the gap between them and God. That is intercession: to care for people so much that we are willing to go to God when their souls are tired and overwhelmed and carry their concerns to the Lord. We stand in the gap created by their need and reach out to God.

Join Tim and I as we "stand in the gap" and pray for those on our prayer list on Sunday mornings at 9:30 in the Prayer Chapel. You will not be asked to pray alone, although you may if you would like. We will pray short prayers for specific requests and then take turns praying the names of those on our list asking for those requests.



Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Barb and Greg Schade
Cindy and Jack Swihart

Homebound Members

Hazel Dunn
Glenna Kohli

Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

Greg and Barb Schade
Cindy & Jack Swihart

In the Military & Missions

Nathan Stewart

Methodist History

Susanna Wesley

Possibly the hardest blow to Samuel was the destruction of the library. Only 2 bits of paper escaped the flames. One was a copy of the only hymn written by Samuel Wesley, now found in the Methodist hymnal, "Behold the Savior of Mankind," and the other, a fragment of his beloved Polyglot Bible, with only a sentence legible: "Sell all thou hast; take up thy cross and follow me."

The family never completely recovered from the fire. The rebuilding of the house plunged them deeper into debt. Susanna once more gathered her children together. She resumed the painstaking process of discipline and education.

Her hands were more than full with children in the nursery and in the schoolroom. However, it was the spiritual welfare of her children, present and absent, that concerned her the most.

For 23 years longer, her life at Epworth continued. As the flames of Samuel's life flickered and burned out, son John read the last prayers for the dying. So Samuel Wesley left Epworth rectory, where for 34 years he had suffered and toiled.

Hardly had she lost her husband, when she was called upon to part with her 2 youngest sons who sailed for America in the full flush of missionary zeal. Susanna sent them away with her blessing, although she never expected to see them again. Had she 20 sons, she would rejoice that they were so employed.

In 1739, Susanna returned to London, an aged widow. All her 25 brothers and sisters were dead. Of her own children, nineteen in all, nine of them survived. As her years grew shorter, her mind strayed back to the earlier faith of her girlhood, of her own father's faith and hope.

Susanna Wesley died in July, 1742, at the age of 73. The same son, John, who had read the prayer for his dying father, read for his mother the same comforting words of victory. Her last request was, "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."

Susanna Wesley gave to the world, not to Methodism alone, a new freedom of large faith, a new democracy of vital religion, and a new intimacy with God.



Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:

January 3, 2021	34
January 10, 2021	33
January 17, 2021	42
January 24, 2021	36

Financial Giving

Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$3,879.00

	Unified Ministry Giving:	Other:
January 3, 2021	\$3,376.27	\$385.09
January 10, 2021	\$4,283.00	\$208.00
January 17, 2021	\$2,763.00	\$188.00
January 24, 2021	\$4,217.00	\$1,122.00

2021 Pledge Cards

We are asking that you prayerfully consider what God is calling you to give to the church in the year 2021. Your pledge will help us set the budget and maintain the work of the church. We look forward, with anticipation, to see how we can serve God and our community in the coming year with the help of your pledge. Pledge cards may be mailed in or placed in the offering plate on the 7th of February. If you did not receive a letter and pledge card, please contact the church office at 419-339-3801.

Flower Calendar



February 7, 2021	Art & Linda Holman
February 14, 2021	Jamie & Jan Wyant
February 21, 2021	OPEN
February 28, 2021	Scott & Gail Fessler

2021 Altar Flower Calendar

There are several openings for Altar flowers for 2021, the flower chart is on the hallway bulletin board or call the office at 419-339-3801, or e-mail the office at officeesp@gmail.com. Please specify if the flowers are in honor of, or in memory of someone, or a special occasion.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday 2/1

Psalm 58, 64, 65, Isaiah 51:17-23
Galatians 4:1-11, Mark 7:24-37

Tuesday 2/2

Psalm 61, 62, 68, Isaiah 52:1-12
Galatians 4:12-20, Mark 8:1-10

Wednesday 2/3

Psalm 72, 119:73-96
Isaiah 54:1-10(11-17)
Galatians 4:21-31, Mark 8:11-26

Thursday 2/4

Psalm 70, 71, 74, Isaiah 55:1-13
Galatians 5:1-15, Mark 8:27-9:1

Friday 2/5

Psalm 69, 73, Isaiah 56:1-8
Galatians 5:16-24, Mark 9:2-13

Saturday 2/6

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76
Isaiah 57:3-13
Galatians 5:25-6:10, Mark 9:14-29

Sunday 2/7

Psalm 34, 93, 96, Isaiah 57:14-21
Hebrews 12:1-6, John 7:37-46

Monday 2/8

Psalm 79, 80, Isaiah 58:1-12
Galatians 6:11-18, Mark 9:30-41

Tuesday 2/9

Psalm 78, Isaiah 59:1-15a
2 Timothy 1:1-14, Mark 9:42-50

Wednesday 2/10

Psalm 81, 82, 119:97-120
Isaiah 59:15b-21
2 Timothy 1:15-2:13
Mark 10:1-16

Thursday 2/11

Psalm 83, 85, 86, Isaiah 60:1-17
2 Timothy 2:14-26
Mark 10:17-31

Friday 2/12

Psalm 88, 91, 92, Isaiah 61:1-9
2 Timothy 3:1-17, Mark 10:32-45

Saturday 2/13

Psalm 87, 90, 136
Isaiah 61:10-62:5
2 Timothy 4:1-8, Mark 10:46-52

Sunday 2/14

Psalm 19, 46, 66, 67
Isaiah 62:6-12
1 John 2:3-11, John 8:12-19

Monday 2/15

Psalm 89, Isaiah 63:1-6
1 Timothy 1:1-17, Mark 1:1-11

Tuesday 2/16

Psalm 95, 100, Isaiah 63:7-14
1 Timothy 1:18-2:8
Mark 11:12-26

Wednesday 2/17

Psalm 101, 109, 119:121-144
Isaiah 63:15-64:9
1 Timothy 3:1-16
Mark 11:27-12:12

Thursday 2/18

Psalm 105, Isaiah 65:1-12
1 Timothy 4:1-16, Mark 12:13-27

Friday 2/19

Psalm 102, 107:1-32
Isaiah 65:17-25
1 Timothy 5:17-22(23-35)
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday 2/20

Psalm 33, 107:33-43, 108
Isaiah 66:1-6
1 Timothy 6:6-21, Mark 12:35-44

Sunday 2/21

Psalm 63, 98, 103
Deuteronomy 8:1-10
1 Corinthians 1:17-31
Mark 2:18-22

Monday 2/22

Psalm 41, 44, 52
Deuteronomy 8:11-20
Hebrews 2:11-18, John 2:1-12

Tuesday 2/23

Psalm 445, 47, 48
Deuteronomy 9:4-12
Hebrews 3:1-11, John 2:13-22

Wednesday 2/24

Psalm 53, 119:49-72
Deuteronomy 9:13-21
Hebrews 3:12-19, John 2:23-3:15

Thursday 2/25

Psalm 95, 60
Deuteronomy 9:23-10:5
Hebrews 4:1-10, John 3:16-21

Friday 2/26

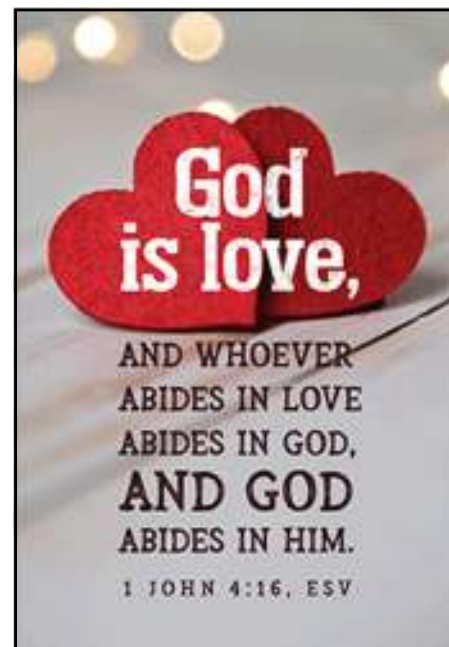
Psalm 40, 51, 54, 95
Deuteronomy 10:12-22
Hebrews 4:11-16, John 3:22-36

Saturday 2/27

Psalm 55, 138, 139
Deuteronomy 11:18-28
Hebrews 5:1-10, John 4:1-26

Sunday 2/28

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84
Jeremiah 1:1-10
1 Corinthians 3:11-23
Mark 3:31-49



2020 Missions Giving Summary

<u>COINS AT COMMUNION GIVING:</u>		<u>2020 AMOUNT GIVEN</u>
Heartbeat of Lima	(January)	\$ 82.97
Immanuel for Family Promise meals	(February)	\$ 99.97
Our Daily Bread	(March)	\$ 66.85
5 Loaves Food Pantry - Allentown	(April)	\$ 40.00
WOC United Methodist Church Camps	(May) No Service 1st Sunday	-
UMCOR - West Virginia Flood Relief	(June) No Service 1st Sunday	-
Brad Joseph Memorial Fund	(July)	\$ 77.35
Meals 'til Monday	(August) No Service	-
Samaritan House	(September)	\$ 76.83
Family Promise	(October)	\$ 80.56
Lima Rescue Mission	(November)	\$ 32.92
Salvation Army	(December)	\$ 7.70
TOTAL:		\$ 556.15

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SPECIAL SUNDAYS GIVINGS:

Human Relations Day	(January)	\$ 12.00
UMCOR Sunday	(March) No Service	-
Native Amer. Awareness Day	(May) No Service	-
Peace with Justice Day	(June) No Service	-
Health & School Kits shipping donations	(September)	\$ 486.00
World Communion Sunday	(October) No Service	-
Student Day	(November)	\$ 140.00

OTHER SPECIAL OFFERINGS/GIVINGS:

Heifer International (\$'s left on cow)	\$ 207.30
TOTAL FOR SPECIAL SUNDAYS/OFFERINGS:	\$ 845.30

SPECIAL SERVICES GIVING (Designated Use of \$'s):

Ash Wednesday (Special Needs Fund) No Service	\$ —
Easter (5 Loaves Food pantry)	\$ 501.66
Easter (Our Daily Bread)	\$ 501.66
Easter (Meals till Monday)	\$ 501.68
Christmas Offering (UMCOR U. S. Disaster Relief)	\$ 840.00
Christmas Offering- (West Ohio Conf. Camps)	\$ 500.00
UMCOR designated gift	\$ 50.00
TOTAL:	\$ 2,895.00

Continued on page 9

Missions

SPECIAL MISSIONS/DESIGNATED GIVING:

2020 AMOUNT GIVEN

Giving to or reimbursements to ramp fund for ramp projects	\$ 3,095.56
Brad Joseph Golf Outing hole sponsorship	\$ 100.00
Health & School Kits (69 Health Kits x \$12; 87 School Kits x \$11)	\$ 1,785.00
Donations to General Missions Fund	\$ 1,068.19
Donations to Crafty Creatures (includes \$500 from Missions Fund)	\$ 511.75
Donations to Immanuel UMC/Family Promise from Missions Fund	\$ 225.00
Donation to Five Loaves Food Pantry from Missions Fund	\$ 150.00
Donation to Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen from Missions Fund	\$ 150.00
Donation to West Ohio Conf. church camps by individual (s)	\$ 200.00
Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes (55 boxes x \$35 +\$9 ship. per box)	\$ 2,420.00
Hats, Gloves, Scarves (96 items x \$6 per item average)	\$ 576.00
TOTAL:	\$ 10,281.50

(Donated items for Family Promise, Food Pantry, and Sunshine Bags—not quantified)

GRAND TOTAL MISSIONS GIVING - 2020:	\$ 14,586.95
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2020 Mission Giving as a % of 2020 Church Budget (\$201,729) = 7.2%



MISSIONS THANK YOU!

Thank you to all who donated to the hat and mitten tree. 52 hats, 27 pairs of knitted gloves, 7 pairs of insulated gloves and 10 scarves, were delivered to Our Daily Bread soup kitchen and Samaritan House for distribution.



Heifer Project

Thank you to everyone that donated to the Heifer Project. We collected \$207. The money was sent to purchase goats, chickens and seeds. Again many thanks to each of you for your contribution.



Missions Report 2020

CONGREGATION AND MISSIONS COMMITTEE EFFORTS DURING 2020:

- Jesus said to “feed my sheep.” Donations of food for the Allentown UMC Five Loaves Food Pantry continued to be strong in 2020 with St. Paul's individuals faithfully filling the food bins every month. Thank you to all who donated food to feed those families who are in need in our Elida community;
- St. Paul's has monetarily supported the Meals 'til Monday mission which provides weekend meals to children from various elementary schools in and around Allen County, including Elida Elementary;
- Bev Nesbitt and her band of faithful workers processed 87 school kits and 69 health kits donated by numerous members of our congregation as part of this annual mission effort. Pastor Paul will deliver the kits to the local collection point when directed to do so;
- The small group, Crafty Creatures continues to bless our congregation and our community with their mission of prayer shawls, blankets, and quilts. They also made significant contributions to our annual mission, Christmas Tree of hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves which were donated to Samaritan House and other local shelters. 96 items were donated;
- Our members gave a total of \$565 during Coins-at-Communion on the first Sunday of each month. Recipients of these funds included many local missions as well as UMCOR. Our members also gave \$845 to United Methodist Special Sundays such as UMCOR Sunday, and Student Day;
- St. Paul's donated \$177 to Brad Joseph Memorial Fund. The Memorial Golf Outing was cancelled this year due to COVID but will return in 2021. The Memorial Fund has given out scholarships for medical mission trips to Kenya, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico & Uganda in the past eleven years;
- Jamie Wyant led an effort by our members to build three wheel-chair ramps and repair two ramps for people with special needs to gain access to their homes. This continues to be a unique mission both funded and constructed by St. Paul's members;
- Families were housed by Family Promise four separate weeks during 2020. However, due to COVID, the families were housed at the Wingate Hotel in Lima. The members provided hot meals on Friday's of those weeks.
- On October 31st members of St. Paul's handed out coffee, hot chocolate and pencils to parents and their children at the church for our Trick-or-Treat Night Mission. Over 300 cups of hot beverages were distributed along with pencils with our name and website on them. Members also participated by donating candy and manning the trunks for Trunk-or-Treat. Our members enjoyed this memorable evening;
- Our Easter offering was designated to the Five Loaves Food Pantry, Our Daily Bread soup kitchen and Meals 'til Monday missions. \$501 was given to each of these missions. \$500 of our Christmas offering went to West Ohio Conference Church Camps, and \$840 was donated to UMCOR U. S. Disaster Relief to help people recover from hurricanes, floods, forest fires and tornados.
- Our youth and adults anonymously left \$207 on “the cow” in the hallway to send to Heifer International to purchase a goat and several chickens for families around the world. Thank-you to our youth and adults for their generous donations;
- A new outreach program called Sunshine Bags was started this year during the pandemic. People of the church donated candy and fun items to be put in bags to bring sunshine to our congregation during these unusual times. This effort continues in 2021 with bags eventually being delivered to all members and some church neighbors.
- St. Paul's Church again participated in a worldwide mission by Samaritan's Purse called Operation Christmas Child. Jamie Wyant headed up the collection of 55 shoeboxes. The shoeboxes were filled with gifts for boys or girls, and given to Samaritan's Purse to distribute to children worldwide. Thank-you to all who filled boxes with gifts for these children with personal letters included;

The people of St. Paul's United Methodist Church donated over \$14,586 to special missions, coins-for-communion, United Methodist Special Sundays, special designated Sundays and other missions and ministries of our church. Thank-you to all who donated to these missions. As we go forward into 2021 we are looking for new ways to impact our community and the world to show people the love of Jesus Christ!

Sunshine Bags



The People of St. Paul's

*To our church family,
We find it difficult to put into words, the blessings
you have been to us. The flowers, cards, and
prayers brought us encouragement. The errands
Corinne, Pastor Paul and food Judy Chaffins gave
us, kept us going. We can tell you God's presence
was with us. Nurses and techs were praying with
us in our rooms. His mercy was great in bringing
fellow Christians to us.*

*Thank you does not cover your kindnesses.
We will pass it on.*

Barb and Greg Schade

*One cold and dreary
Monday the doorbell
rang and there was a
true breath of good
cheer and happiness in
Pastor Paul and the
church Sunshine Sack.*

*Thanks to all who
contribute to this special
outreach.. It made my
day!!!*

*Fondly,
Dottie Jennell*

*Pastor Paul and Sunshine
People,
Thank you so much for the
Sunshine Bag, it brightened our
day. Can't wait to try
everything , it looks yummy.*

*Love and Blessing,
Don and Mary Irvin*

Thank You!

*Thank you for the
Sunshine sacks! We are
truly blessed to be a part
of an amazing church.*

*Dominic, Kelly
Demi and Dakota DeRose*

*Mary and I would like to thank you for
the flowers that were sent to her in the
hospital. She is getting stronger thru
therapy twice a week. She is able to
take care of herself again and can walk
75 ft. without stopping.*

*Thanks again,
Ron and Mary Steiner*

*Dear church family,
Thank you so much for the wind
chimes in memory of our sister Betty.
Thank you to everyone for your
prayers and thinking of us during
this difficult time.*

*Larry and Shirley Moser
Ron and Mary Steiner*



Our sympathy to Mary and Ron Steiner and Shirley and Larry Moser on the passing of Mary and Shirley's sister, Betty Wendt. Cards may reach the Steiner Family at 302 N. Greenlawn, Elida 45807, and the Moser Family at 703 Sunnydale St., Elida 45807.

Meetings

NO PPR

February 2, 2021
Trustees...7:00 PM

February 3, 2021
Worship..10:00 AM

No Ad Council/Finance

NO Missions

Sundays
Prayer...9:30 AM
Worship...10:00 AM

FEBRUARY

2021

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2 Barb Schade	3	4 Cyndi Smith	5 Don Irvin	6
7 Gary Hurd	8 Cari Metzger	9 Michelle Grapner	10 Marla Scannell Caroline Stengel	11	12	13
14	15 Tara Gaghan Bill Weaver	16	17 Doug Fox	18 Sherilyn Ellinger Sydney Lane	19	20 Ron Steiner
21 Mary Kaye Pease	22 Andrew Piper	23	24 Heather Selover	25	26 Addison Chaffins	27 Anna Selover
28 Makayla Bok Kate Stengel						

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Gary & Janet Grigg
February 18
55 years

Gene & Linda Craft
February 25
54 years

Larry & Shirley Moser
February 28
50 years



Featured Recipes from St. Paul's Cooks

Pig Lickin' Cake

By Myrna Metzger

Ingredients		Instructions
1 pkg.	Yellow Cake Mix (regular size)	Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all cake ingredients together and pour into a 9x13 greased and floured pan. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes. Frosting: Combine pineapple, pudding and juice. Fold in Cool Whip. Spread over cool cake. Can also be made in layers.
1/2 cup	Oil	
4	Eggs	
1 (11 oz)	Mandarin Oranges with juice	
	Frosting:	
1 (16 oz)	Crushed pineapple with juice	
1 pkg.	Vanilla pudding	
9 oz	Cool Whip	



SEEKING RECIPES!!

We would love to pass your special recipes on to others by featuring them on this page of our newsletter.

Recipes may be e-mailed, snail mailed, or brought into the church office.

KIDZ KORNER

Loving embraces

Express your love and friendship with handcrafted bracelets.



What you need:

- Adult help
- Bowl of boiling water
- Wide wooden craft sticks
- Glass cup
- Markers, paint or decorative tape

What you do:

1. Pour about 3 cups of boiling water into a bowl. Soak sticks in the water about 30 minutes.
2. Remove sticks and slowly, gently bend them into a curve.
3. To maintain the shape, place curved sticks inside a glass cup overnight to dry completely.
4. Remove and decorate the bracelets, which make fun Valentine's Day gifts.

Puzzle!

Discover the identity of a biblical person. First, assign a number value to each letter, starting with M=1, N=2, O=3, ... A=15, etc. Then use the code to complete the clues.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
15												1	2	3											

FIRST CLUE: 15 7 15 13 3 9 2 21 11 5 2

22 19 25 23 26 26 19 18 7 3 1 19 3 2 19.

SECOND CLUE: 22 19 11 15 7 8 19 2 18 23 2 21

7 22 19 19 4 23 2 8 22 19 18 19 7 19 6 8

11 22 19 2 21 3 18 17 15 26 26 19 18 22 23 1.

THIRD CLUE: 15 7 15 16 15 16 13 22 19 11 15 7

20 3 9 2 18 20 26 3 15 8 23 2 21 23 2 15

16 15 7 25 19 8 23 2 8 22 19 2 23 26 19 6 23 10 19 6.

Who is this person? _____

Answer: Moses

St. Paul's United Methodist Church105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

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45807
Permit No. 71**Our Web Address:**
www.elidastpaulschurch.org**Our Facebook page**
Elida St. Paul's Church**Twitter Account**
@ESPCHURCH

Living Our Faith

The Parable Of The Lost Ring

Only three years after Paula and Joe Walter married, her wedding ring was lost as she played catch with their son. Naturally, she was heartbroken. Over the years, whenever family and friends gathered in the back yard, she urged everyone to look for the ring — but to no avail. Because the yard borders on woods, Paula feared the ring had flown into the trees, never to be seen again. But just before the couple's 40th anniversary, landscapers hired to do work in the yard brought her a surprise: They'd found the ring — right where Paula had been playing with her child so long ago! Like the woman in Jesus' parable who finally found her lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), Paula rejoiced. God too searches until every person who has strayed or been flung away from the faith is found. Sometimes the place we rediscover faith is right where we've looked before. What makes the difference? A different person helping us search? Light shining in a different way? We may never know. We simply rejoice — and so does God

—Heidi Mann