

St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 48, Issue 2

February, 2025

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

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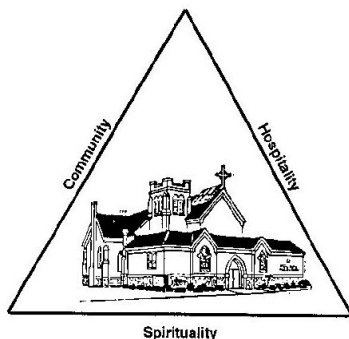
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Hello Everyone,

February is here, and it is a time when the world around us focuses on love, with Valentine's Day taking up a large portion of our societies focus in February. Why not have the same focus here at St. Paul's? We are going to spend 5 weeks looking at "What Is Love?" Not just in a sermon series but by reaching out to our community through your actions. In February and March, you will be given an opportunity to put God's love into action through sharing love and sunshine with someone who needs to know that love. I do mean everyone, from age 1 to 99. I hope you will join me in participating in our community outreach based on love. More information and your assignment, will be explained in church.

There is something else I want to talk to you about this month: In June, we have an opportunity to celebrate with other United Methodists from Allen County during a gathering of churches for a special Pentecost Sunday celebration. The details are still vague, but we would all gather in one place, maybe outside or in a neutral location, to worship together as we all celebrate the power of the Holy Spirit. The organizers are trying to get our District Superintendent to come lead the service or maybe even Bishop Jung. If this is something you might be interested in helping with, please let me know, and we can go together to some of the planning sessions.

Last, but certainly not least. A big, Big, BIG Thank You goes out to everyone who helped clean up and clean out the basement! There were a lot of hours of labor, that went into the clean-up that filled a small dumpster with things that hadn't been used in years. As well as cleaning and organizing the kitchen, hospitality, the back room, and the old basement. Your effort has made a huge difference! There will be future projects around the church where you will have a chance to help. Just stay tuned, for further project announcements, and remember, I'll see you in the mission field.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Paul



Thought for the Month:

Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud.

—Maya Angelou

February 2
'Coins for Communion'
to benefit Samaritans Purse

Presidents Day
 February 15



February 2



February 14



Food Pantry Sunday
February 16

Items needed:
Soup and soup fixings with extras:
crackers, broth noodles..

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's



Deadline: the 22nd
of each month

Christian Symbol

CENSER & INCENSE



A censer (or thurible) is a vessel for burning incense during worship. Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, as well as some Protestant ones, often do this on special occasions. Censers come in many sizes, shapes and designs. A worship leader may swing a chain censer to waft the fragrant smoke over the congregation during a procession or benediction. As incense burns in a censer and smoke wafts upward, it symbolizes prayers of the faithful, floating to God. "May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2, NIV).

St. Paul's Epistle

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Pianist:	Lois Cook
Choir Director	Casey Rife
Custodian:	Dave Decker

February 17



Kindness Kickbacks

Random Acts of Kindness Day, observed each year on February 17, is a reminder of the power of altruism. Followers of Jesus express kindness selflessly, out of love for God and our neighbors. Yet in return, we reap emotional — and even physical — benefits.

Researchers have identified a “helper’s high” that can ease anxiety and depression. Spontaneous or planned acts of “pro-social spending” have been shown to reduce blood pressure, improve heart health, reduce pain and even extend longevity.

For maximum impact, experts recommend getting creative with random acts of kindness and mixing them up. But no matter how you spread kindness, you’re bound to experience blessings in return!

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

Time

Time is
too slow for those who wait,
too swift for those who fear,
too long for those who grieve,
too short for those who rejoice.
But for those who love,
time is eternity.

—Henry Van Dyke



BOOK Club

**Saturday, March 1
at 9:00 AM**

“The Heart Mender”

By: Andy Andrews

available in the library for \$7.00

All Are Welcome!

Valentine's Day

True Love

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:

- "When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be." —Leo Tolstoy
- "You don't love someone because they're perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they're not." —Jodi Picoult
- "Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses." —Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

"We love because God first loved us." —1 John 4:19 (NCV)

Valentines For Kids

Valentine's Day isn't just for schoolchildren and sweethearts. Loving parents should strive to give their children these life-changing gifts during February and beyond.

- **Acceptance:** Say and show that you love children for who they are. Give this gift with a kiss.
- **Self-confidence:** Help boost kids' trust in themselves. Give this gift with a hug.
- **Peace:** Model how to give your worries to God. Offer this present with laughter.
- **Gratitude:** Help children be genuinely thankful for each new day and for all of life. Give this gift as they go out the door.
- **Faith:** Introduce children to Jesus, the best friend they'll ever have. Do this by taking them to church and Sunday school regularly.

Hymn History

O How I Love Jesus

"Then Sings My Soul" Book 2, By Robert J. Morgan

1855

We love Him because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19 (NKJV)

Frederick Whitfield was born on a cold January day in 1829, in tiny Threapwood, England, population about 250. He attended college in Dublin, Ireland, and devoted his life to pastoral ministry in the Church of England. His greatest legacy is the hymn about the name of Jesus, written when he was a student. Generations of Christians have loved "There Is A Name I Love To Hear" with its peppy refrain: "*O how I love Jesus, / O how I love Jesus, / O how I love Jesu, / because He first loved me.*"

You might be interested to know that while Whitfield wrote the *verses* to this hymn, he didn't compose its famous chorus.

Both the simple words and the nimble tune of "O How I Love Jesus" are American inventions of unknown origin. They floated around like orphans, attaching themselves to various hymns in the nineteenth century. One hymnologist found Forty-two occurrences of this chorus in early songbooks. Even such stately hymns as "Amazing Grace" and "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" were occasionally sung to this lighthearted melody, with "O How I Love Jesus" used as the refrain.

But when "O How I Love Jesus" was finally wedded to Whitfield's "There Is a Name I Love to Hear," it was a marriage made in heaven. We've been singing it ever since. Some of Whitfield's original verses have fallen by the wayside, which is too bad; every verse tells us what the Name of Jesus can do in our lives:

*It tells me what my Father hath / in store for every day,
And though I tread a darksome path, / yields sunshine all the way.*

*It tells of One whose loving heart / can feel my deepest woe;
Who in each sorrow bears a part / that none can bear below.*

*It bids my trembling heart rejoice; / it dries each rising tear.
It tells me, in a "still small voice," / to trust and never fear.*

*This Name shall shed its fragrance still / along this thorny road,
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill / that leads me up to God.*

*And there with all the blood-bought throng, / from sin and sorrow free,
I'll sing the new eternal song / of Jesus' love for me.*



Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:

January 5, 2025	71
January 12, 2025	74
January 19, 2025	59
January 26, 2025	57

Financial Giving

Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$4,386.25

Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
January 5, 2025	\$4,469.17	\$373.57
January 12, 2025	\$3,948.56	\$113.00
January 19, 2025	\$1,860.24	\$72.00
January 26, 2025	\$2,015.58	\$253.00

Sunday School Attendance

January 5, 2025	16
January 12, 2025	13
January 19, 2025	8
January 26, 2025	12

Hospitality Cart

February 2, 2025	Sharla Murphy
February 9, 2025	Stacy McAdams
February 16, 2025	Virginia Hollar
February 23, 2025	OPEN

Altar Flower Calendar

February 2, 2025	Ron Steiner
February 9, 2025	Paul Scannell
February 16, 2025	Gary & Janet Grigg
February 23, 2025	Jamie & Jan Wyant



Daily Bible Readings

Saturday 2/1

Psalm 55, 158, 139, Isaiah 51:1-8
Galatians 3:23-29, Mark 7:1-23

Sunday 2/2

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84
Isaiah 51:9-16
Hebrews 11:8-16, John 7:14-31

Monday 2/3

Psalm 56, 57, 64, 65
Isaiah 51:17-23
Galatians 4:1-11, Mark 7:24-37

Tuesday 2/4

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

Wednesday 2/5

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

Thursday 2/6

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

Friday 2/7

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

Saturday 2/8

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

Sunday 2/9

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

Monday 2/10

Psalm 77, 80, Isaiah 58:1-12
Galatians 6:11-18, Mark 9:30-41

Tuesday 2/11

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

Wednesday 2/12

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

Thursday 2/13

Psalm 85, 86, 146, 147
Isaiah 60:1-17
2 Timothy 2:14-26
Mark 10:17-31

Friday 2/14

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

Saturday 2/15

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

Sunday 2/16

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

Monday 2/17

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

Tuesday 2/18

Psalm 94, 97, 99, Isaiah 63:7-14
1 Timothy 1:18-2:8
Mark 11:12-26

Wednesday 2/19

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

Thursday 2/20

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

Friday 2/21

Psalm 102, 107:1-32
Isaiah 65:17-25
1 Timothy 5:17-25
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday 2/22

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

Sunday 2/23

Psalm 118, 145, Isaiah 66:7-14
1 John 3:4-10, John 10:7-16

Monday 2/24

Psalm 106, Ruth 1:1-14
2 Corinthians 1:1-11
Matthew 5:1-12

Tuesday 2/25

Psalm 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, Ruth 1:15-22
2 Corinthians 1:12-22
Matthew 5:13-20

Wednesday 2/26

Psalm 119:145-176, 128, 129, 130
Ruth 2:1-13
2 Corinthians 1:23-2:17
Matthew 5:21-26

Thursday 2/27

Psalm 131, 132, 134, 135
Ruth 2:14-23
2 Corinthians 3:1-8
Matthew 5:27-37

Friday 2/28

Psalm 140, 141, 142, 143
Ruth 3:1-18
2 Corinthians 4:1-12
Matthew 5:38-48



I will sing of
the Lord's great
love forever.

PSALM 89:1

Poem

Love Letter From God

*Today I received,
a love letter from God
I opened up my Bible
here is what I read. . .*

*I am your creator,
before you were born
I molded and formed you
just like the dew in the morn.
I'm the remedy to your needs,
I am your soothing balm
I'm the peace in your storm
I am the voice that is calm.
I'm all the grace you need,
in me, there is eternal life
I came so that I could bear
the burden of your strife.
I am your staff of comfort,
I will shield and protect you
through life's complexities
together we'll journey through.
I am the anchor of your soul,
A safe place to run and hide
I will never forsake you. . .
I am always at your side.
I'm the lamp unto your way,
with my word I will guide
I am the One who you feel
stirring up deep inside.
I am your Creator,
I knew you from the start
that is why I gave to you
for Me ~ a loving heart!*

~~~~~

*John 16:33 King James Version*

*"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer: I have overcome the world."*



# Puzzle

## Bible Quiz



The short Old Testament book of Lamentations is a set of communal laments (sorrowful songs) about the destruction in 587 B.C. of which city, by which people?

- A. Babylon; the Assyrians
- B. Jerusalem; the Babylonians
- C. Rome; the Greeks
- D. Caesarea Philippi; the Romans

Answer: B  
(See Bible commentaries.)



# Puzzle!

Use the clues to fill in the boxes. Then write those letters on the correct numbered lines below to complete 1 John 4:16 (NIV).

A place to live

|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Opposite of dark

|   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|----|
|   |   |   |   |    |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Companion

|    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |

Hand greeting

|    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |    |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |

Male adult

|    |    |    |
|----|----|----|
|    |    |    |
| 21 | 22 | 23 |



8 2 16 13 4 6 2 19 5

17 9 2 5 19 5 12 6 7 19 5 4

13 15 6 2 19 20 6 7 19 14 4

13 15 8 2 16 18 15 16

8 2 16 13 23 10 1 14 21

1 John 4:16, NIV

Answers: house, light, friend, wave, man; God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16, NIV

## Missions

Thank you to everyone who bought or made items for the hat and mitten tree. Items were delivered to Our Daily Bread and Cross Roads Crises Center. We collected 54 hats, 56 pairs of gloves/mittens and 6 scarves, 6 pairs of socks ,and 2 head bands to people in need.



**THANK YOU!**



Thank you to all who provided food to the Family Promise mission on Friday, January 24. The families greatly appreciate the hot meals and snacks. The next date to provide a meal is April 25th.



**'Coins For Communion'**  
February 2  
Will benefit  
Samaritans Purse



### Heifer Project Mission

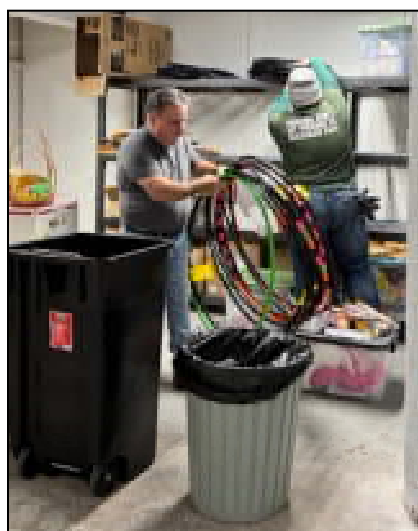
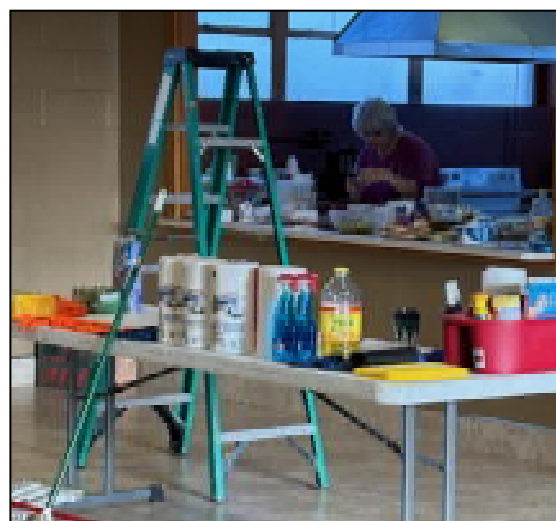
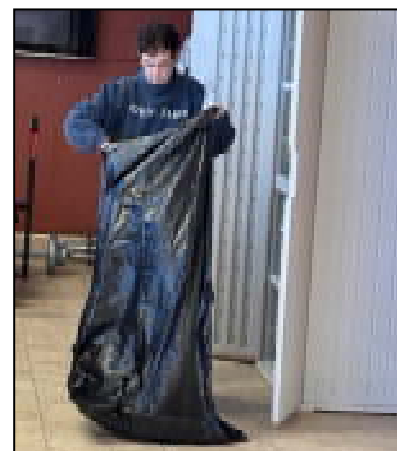
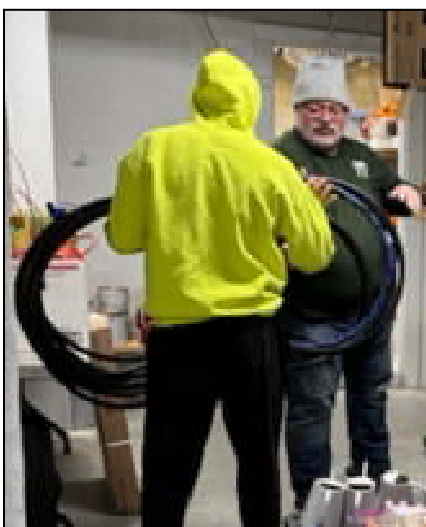
Thank you to everyone who have placed a donation in the cow in the hallway. The Children's Elementary Sunday School class chose to designate what they want the funds to be designated for. These funds, and the list chosen are sent on to Heifer International. This non-profit organization works to end hunger and poverty in partnership with the communities they serve. These programs support entrepreneurs around the world, creating lasting change from the ground up.

**Thank You to all who have donated!**

# Winter Clean-up

## BIG THANKS!

Monday morning, January 27, fourteen hard-working people gathered to clean St. Paul's old basement, the Fellowship Hall rooms, and the Welcome Center. It was amazing to see the transformation from mess to organized and cleaned. A huge thank you to our custodian, Dave Decker, for cleaning he bats' messes and preparing the areas to be organized. Many, many thanks to this incredibly wonderful team: Gloria Brunk, Dave Decker, Virginia Hollar, Nancy Kizer, Corinne Piper, Cody Scannell, Marla Scannell, Paul Scannell, Barb Schade, Denny Thompson, Janna Thompson, Betty Wright, Jamie Wyant and Jan Wyant.





# The People of St. Paul's

*St. Paul's Church,*

*Thanks for the flowers that were sent to my room in the hospital, they brightened up my room.*

*Also, thanks for all the cards, visits, and prayers I got after my fall.*

*I am getting better each day and will find out how the bone is healing next week. If doing good, I may be able to put some weight on the leg, but until then, I am still non-weight-bearing*

*Thanks to everyone,  
Love, Gary*

*Thank You!*

*St. Paul's Members and friends,*

*Thank you for the gift you sent at the passing of Eleanor Theodore. Your care and concern are truly appreciated.*

*Tim and Sue*

*Thank you so much for the beautiful flowers.  
It brightened my day while in the hospital.*

*I appreciate the continued prayers and support through this journey.*

*Scott Grapner*

## Remember in Prayer

### Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Carole Grapner  
Tracy Sdao

### Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

Carole Grapner  
Gary Hurd  
Tracy Sdao

### In the Military

Nathan Stewart



**St. Paul's Vision Statement:**  
*Is for the Elida community to be led to Christ through words and deeds enabling youth to have purpose, families to be nurtured and supported, and senior citizens to feel valued.*

**Our Biblical Purpose Statement:**  
*Elida St. Paul's United Methodist Church exists as God's people embracing His grace through humble service to all.*

# Meetings

February 3, 2025  
PPR/ Nominations  
7:00 PM

February 4, 2025  
Worship Mtg...  
1:00 PM

February 4, 2025  
Trustees...7:00 PM

February 10, 2023  
Ad Council/Finance..  
7:00 PM

February 18, 2025  
Missions... 7:00 PM

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

Wednesday  
Choir...7:00 PM

# FEBRUARY

## 2025

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

|                       |                                          |                         |                                       |                                      |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                       |                                          |                         |                                       |                                      |                                   | 1                                |
| 2<br>Barb Schade      | 3                                        | 4<br>Cyndi Smith        | 5<br>Don Irvin                        | 6                                    | 7<br>Gary Hurd                    | 8<br>Cari Metzger                |
| 9<br>Michelle Grapner | 10<br>Marla Scannell<br>Caroline Stengel | 11                      | 12                                    | 13                                   | 14                                | 15<br>Tara Gaghen<br>Bill Weaver |
| 16                    | 17<br>Doug Fox                           | 18<br>Sherilyn Ellinger | 19                                    | 20<br>Greyson McAdams<br>Ron Steiner | 21                                | 22<br>Andrew Piper               |
| 23                    | 24<br>Heather Selover                    | 25                      | 26<br>Addison Chaffins<br>Dave Decker | 27<br>Anna Selover                   | 28<br>Makayla Bok<br>Kate Stengel |                                  |



Gary & Janet Grigg  
February 18  
59 years.

Gene & Linda Craft  
February 25  
58 years

Larry & Shirley Moser  
February 28  
54 years






# Featured Recipes

## Three Potato Soup

*By Linda Holman*

| Ingredients     |                      | Instructions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 medium        | Potatoes, cubed      | <p>Combine potatoes, onions, celery, water, and salt in a saucepan. Cover and cook 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Do Not Drain.</p> <p>Mash vegetables slightly.</p> <p>Stir in milk, butter, parsley, and if desired, pepper; heat.</p> <p>Garnish with green onions, if desired.</p>  |
| 2               | Green onions, sliced |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1 stalk         | Celery, chopped      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1 cup           | Water                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1/4 tsp.        | Salt                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1- (12 oz.) can | Evaporated milk      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1/2 cup         | Butter or margarine  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 1 tsp.          | Parsley flakes       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

## Buttery Corn Bread

*By Jeannine May*

| Ingredients |                               | Instructions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2/3 cup     | Butter or margarine, softened | <p>Preheat oven to 400 degrees.</p> <p>In mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar</p> <p>Combine eggs and milk.</p> <p>Combine flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with egg mixture.</p> <p>Pour into greased 13x9x2 inch baking pan.</p> <p>Bake 22 to 27 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.</p> <p>Cut into squares; serve warm with soup or very good alone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This is a melt-in-your-mouth corn bread!</p> |
| 1 cup       | Sugar                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 3           | Eggs                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1 2/3 cup   | Milk                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 2 1/3 cup   | All-purpose flour             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1 cup       | Cornmeal                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 4 1/2 tsp.  | Baking powder                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1 tsp.      | Salt                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|             |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

# KIDZ KORNER

 a lovely  
*aroma*

Make this sweet-smelling gift for a friend or valentine.

**What you need:**

- Colored felt
- Scrap paper
- Permanent marker
- Scissors
- String
- Essential oils (rose, lavender, etc.)

**What you do:**

1. Draw a flower shape on paper and cut it out.
2. Place the flower template on felt and draw around it with the marker.
3. Cut out the felt flower. Then cut a small slit or hole through it.
4. Cut 8 inches of string. Thread it through the felt flower and tie to form a loop for hanging.
5. To the felt, add 3 to 5 drops of essential oil. This air freshener will last about 2 weeks.
6. Revive the scent, as needed, by adding a few drops of essential oil.

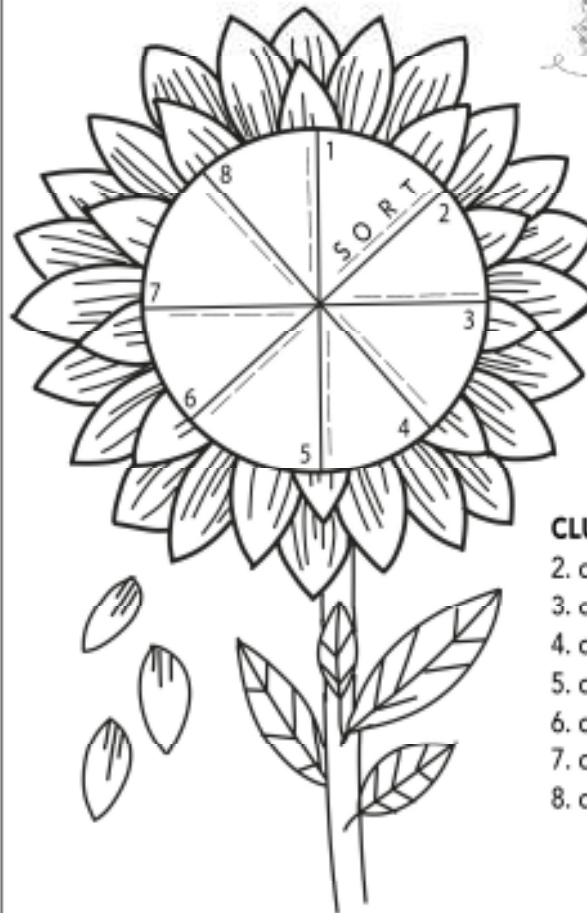




## THE LOVE CYCLE

In 1 John 4, God instructs us to love other people. Where does our love come from?

Directions: Starting at #1 and going clockwise, solve each clue to create a new four-letter word. Then write the eighth word in both blanks below to complete 1 John 4:19, NIV.



We \_\_\_\_\_  
because [God] first  
\_\_\_\_\_d us.

1 John 4:19, NIV

### CLUES

2. change 1 letter: a tent to play in
3. change 2 letters: a crease in paper
4. change 1 letter: a precious metal
5. change 2 letters: a beautiful dress
6. change 1 letter: opposite of up
7. change 2 letters: a type of bird
8. change 1 letter: God is this (see 1 John 4:16).

Answers: fort, fold, gold, gown, down, dove, love, We love because [God] first loved us. 1 John 4:19, NIV

**St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

105 E. Main St.  
Elida, OH 45807

\*Return Service Requested

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Organization  
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45807  
Permit No. 71

**Our Web Address:**  
**[www.elidastpaulschurch.org](http://www.elidastpaulschurch.org)**

**Our Facebook page**  
**Elida St. Paul's Church**

**Twitter Account**  
**@ESPCHURCH**

February

## Living Our Faith

### Love Makes Us Worthy

Unlike God, who loves unconditionally, humans often make choices and set limits when doling out affection. But Thomas Merton reminds us, "Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody's business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy."

As for how to develop and maintain that type of love? Merton shares, "It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my [neighbors]."