

St. Paul's Epistle

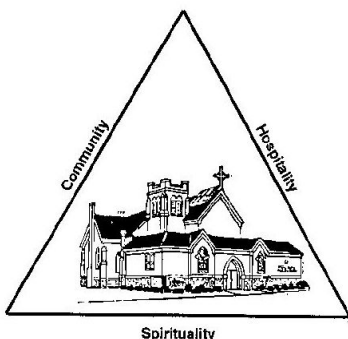
An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 43 Issue 11

November, 2020

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church
105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807
419-339-3801
officeesp@gmail.com

Rev. Paul Scannell
419/909-9419
Cell Phone: 734/660-1984
pastorespc@gmail.com
4pastorpaul@gmail.com



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November, the month when we traditionally give thanks but 2020 has not exactly been a year where giving thanks is the first thing to come to mind. I have just finished a book about the Pilgrims of Plymouth and the myths that surrounded the first Thanksgiving as well as what those early settlers did that would become part of the foundation for the United State of America. Even though many in their company died in the first year of their settlement of Plymouth they still stopped to thank God for what they had. A belief so strong, they knew if they only followed God everything would work for God's Glory. We face the same dilemma this year and I for one will continue to give thanks no matter the outcome because I know God's plan will prevail.

We have been emailing weekly updates about what has been happening in the life of the church, and for 33 weeks I saved those emails in a COVID-19 Update folder. The response to these updates has been very positive, and we continue to use them to keep you informed of our changing conditions between newsletters. My secretary has informed me these updates will continue, virus or no virus, and I don't want to call it a COVID-19 update anymore. SO, we are on the lookout for a name for this weekly update. I took it upon myself to name the update, but somehow the great idea I had about a "St. Paul's Snapshot" did not ring true. The search is on for a name "What's Up Weekly", "Weekly Bulletin", "The Week Ahead" or send us your suggestion and we will choose the one that fits the best.

The Sunshine bags will be packed in the days ahead so be sure to drop off your donation to brighten the day of someone you know. Remember, it should be a small item that will bring a little sunshine and remind people that we at St Paul's are thinking about them. Also a big thanks to everyone who has helped with the missions that we have continued to do in spite of the pandemic. Building a ramp, packing a sunshine bag, handing out candy and hot chocolate on Halloween, or donating food to the 5 Loaves Food Pantry. Keep up the good works and remember there is always something to be thankful for if we only have the faith to seek it out.

Yours in Christ

Pastor Paul



Thought for the Month:

The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest.

- William Blake

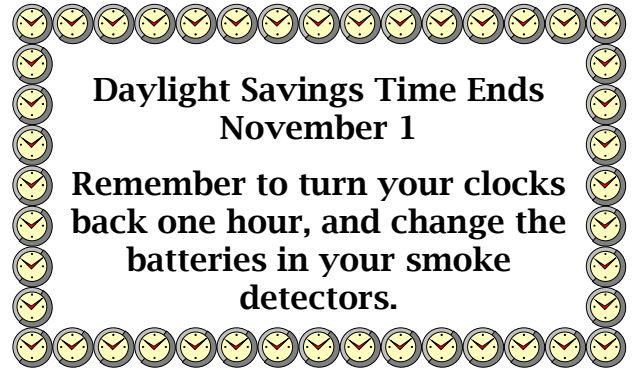
**All Saints Sunday
November 1**

Bring a white candle in a holder to place on the altar in memory of loved ones.



**Daylight Savings Time Ends
November 1**

Remember to turn your clocks back one hour, and change the batteries in your smoke detectors.



November 1

Coins for Communion to benefit The Lima Rescue Mission

November 2

Assemble Sunshine Bags
10:00 AM



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

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

Christian Symbol

ST. ANDREW'S CROSS

This cross is a symbol of humility and suffering. It first came into use during the Middle Ages. According to tradition, St. Andrew was crucified while preaching in Greece. He felt unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus, so he begged that his cross be made differently. St. Andrew's cross is the national cross of Scotland. It's also called Cross Saltire.



St. Paul's Epistle

is published by St. Paul's United Methodist Church

Subscription Rate: NONE

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



November 20
Family Promise Mission
 Watch for further information in
 Sunday morning announcements .

Food Pantry
November 15
 Bring in non-perishable items
 to be taken to the Five Loaves
 Food Pantry at
 The Church At Allentown



THANKSGIVING DAY
November 26
 Office Closed

Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

A Meaningful Month

Consumerism can prevent us from noticing needs, writes Walter Brueggemann (*The Prophetic Imagination*). A culture steeped in materialism and greed can “block out the cries of the denied ones ... so that no one discerns misery alive in the heart of God.”

In November, we celebrate Thanksgiving, Christ the King Sunday and the start of Advent. What does it mean that Christ is our King? How can we truly give God thanks and prepare for Jesus' coming? It's a good time to ponder what hurts God's heart — and how we can help.

If someone is lonely, perhaps we can invite them to Thanksgiving dinner. If we sense inequality saddening God, we might advocate for fair policies. If God is in pain because some of his children have too little, we can share our resources. In so doing, we welcome Christ the King among us, and give him meaningful thanks.

Christ the King Sunday
November 22



November 29
1st Sunday of Advent
HOPE

**Anyone interested in doing the
 reading and lighting of the
 Advent candle, please notify
 Pastor Paul or the
 church office.**

2020/2021 College Students

Megan Emmons

The Ohio State University-Lima, Sophomore
Early Childhood
514 N Elizabeth St, Lima, OH 45801

Joshua Guess

The Ohio State University-Columbus, Junior
Strategic Communications with a Business Minor
2136 Summit St, Columbus, OH 43201

Isaac McAdams

The Ohio State University-Lima, Sophomore
Transferring to Main Campus in January
Integrated Social Studies Education 7-12 Grades
7300 Ridge Rd, Elida, OH 45807

Torie McAdams

University of Toledo,
3rd (and final) Year Graduate Program
Occupational Therapy
18258 Road M, Cloverdale, OH 45827

Jenson Nagy

Owens Community College, Sophomore
Pre-Radiological Tech
5453 Nesbitt St, Apartment 2, Elida, OH 45807

David and Samantha Scannell

Eastern Michigan University
David - Psychology, also attends
Washtenaw Community College,
Welding and Fabrication
Samm - Chemical Engineering
24811 Pennie St, Dearborn Heights, MI 48125



Please pray for these students, and send them notes of encouragement throughout the year.

United Methodist Student Day
Sunday, November 29

Business of the Church

Annual Conference 2020

Well, it happened in September! The 51st session of the West Ohio Conference was a virtual gathering of nearly 1,600 clergy and lay members. Bishop Gregory Palmer presided over the conference under the theme, "Be Not Afraid, God Is With Us." Using the 21st chapter of Revelation, the Bishop preached about uncertain times facing our nation, world and global churches. How appropriate for this Covid pandemic period with which we are living. Bishop Palmer further added, "in spite of the chaos... God says, 'I'm going to make a home among you.' What a God! God does not abandon us. God is with us." As always this sermon was uplifting. The Virtual Choir was awesome to watch and hear as they sang Mark Miller's arrangement of "And Are We Yet Alive." To view videos and colorful photos of the day, go to this site: westohioumc.org/conference/news/2020-west-ohio-conference-annual-session-summary

Business was short and the three recommendations were passed:

1. 2021 Budget
2. Pension and Health Benefits
3. Commission on Equitable Compensation (minimum salaries for clergy will increase 2 percent.)

Reports and recognitions were also part of the day. Ordination ceremonies followed.

Linda Craft, Lay Delegate



Samaritans Purse Operation Christmas Child

A small shoe box can have a big impact. What goes into the box is fun, but what comes out of it is eternal. Guides for how to pack a shoebox may be picked up in the church sanctuary or online at samaritanspur.org. Be a part of changing children's lives all over the world in Jesus' name through the power of a simple gift with Operation Christmas Child. Remember to pray that God will touch the heart of every child who receives a shoebox gift. Please include a donation of \$9.00 per box to cover international shipping and other costs.

**St. Paul's Last Sunday to collect boxes is
Sunday, November 22**

Thank You

Thank you so much for your support. It is truly appreciated.

God Bless You and Stay Safe,
Lima Samaritan House Staff

Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:

October 4, 2020	49
October 11, 2020 <i>No in-person worship</i>	
October 18, 2020 <i>No in-person worship</i>	
October 25, 2020	26

Financial Giving

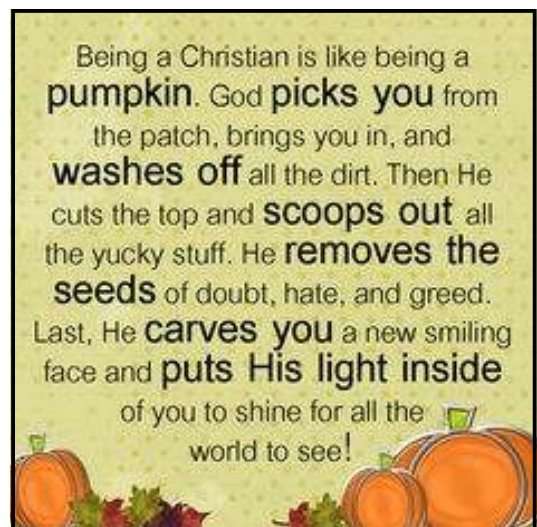
Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$3,879.00

	Unified Ministry Giving:	Other:
October 4, 2020	\$2,756.00	\$279.00
October 11, 2020	\$2,480.00	\$512.00
October 18, & 25 offering combined	\$2,816.00	\$1,099.00

We are continuing to stay in contact by sending out our weekly update letter, "The Weekly Snapshot" or "What's Up Weekly". Title to be determined. You may receive this update either by e-mail, or for those without e-mail, snail mail. If you are not receiving this please contact the church office at 419-339-3801 or e-mail to officeespc@gmail.com

Flower Calendar

November 1, 2020	Greg & Barb Schade
November 8, 2020	Lois Cook
November 15, 2020	Gary & Deb Hurd
November 22, 2020	Carl & Lois Rabley
November 29, 2020	Bill & Joyce Nichols



Daily Bible Readings

Sunday 11/1

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84
Nehemiah 5:1-19
Acts 20:7-12, Luke 12:22-31

Monday 11/2

Psalm 56, 57, 58, 64, 65
Nehemiah 6:1-19
Revelation 10:1-11
Matthew 13:36-43

Tuesday 11/3

Psalm 61, 62, 68
Nehemiah 12:27-31a, 42b-47
Revelation 11:1-19
Matthew 13:44-52

Wednesday 11/4

Psalm 72, 119:73-96
Nehemiah 13:4-22
Revelation 12:1-12
Matthew 13:53-58

Thursday 11/5

Psalm 70, 71, 74
Ezra 7:(1-10) 11-26
Revelation 14:1-13
Matthew 14:1-12

Friday 11/6

Psalm 69, 73
Ezra 7:27-28, 8:21-36
Revelation 15:1-8
Matthew 14:13-21

Saturday 11/7

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76, Ezra 9:1-15
Revelation 17:1-14
Matthew 14:22-36

Sunday 11/8

Psalm 34, 93, 96, Ezra 10:1-17
Acts 24:10-21, Luke 14:12-24

Monday 11/9

Psalm 79, 80
Nehemiah 9:1-15 (16-25)
Revelation 18:1-8
Matthew 15:1-20

Tuesday 11/10

Psalm 78, Nehemiah 9:26-38
Revelation 18:9-20
Matthew 15:21-28

Wednesday 11/11

Psalm 81, 82, 119:97-120
Nehemiah 7:73b-8:3, 5-18
Revelation 18:21-24
Matthew 15:29-39

Thursday 11/12

Psalm 83, 85, 86
Revelation 19:1-10
Matthew 16:1-12

Friday 11/13

Psalm 88, 91, 92
Revelation 19:11-16
Matthew 16:13-20

Saturday 11/14

Psalm 87, 90, 136
Revelation 20:1-6, Mark 16:21-28

Sunday 11/15

Psalm 66, 67, 19, 46
Acts 28:14b-23, Luke 16:1-13

Monday 11/16

Psalm 89
Revelation 20:7-15
Matthew 17:1-13

Tuesday 11/17

Psalm 95, 100
Revelation 21:1-8
Matthew 17:14-21

Wednesday 11/18

Psalm 101, 109, 119:121-144
Revelation 21:9-21
Matthew 17:22-27

Thursday 11/19

Psalm 105
Revelation 21:22-22:5
Matthew 18:1-9

Friday 11/20

Psalm 102, 107:1-32
Revelation 22:6-13
Matthew 18:10-20

Saturday 11/21

Psalm 33, 107:33-43, 108
Isaiah 65:17-25
Revelation 22:14-21
Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday 11/22

Psalm 118, 145, Isaiah 19:19-25
Romans 15:5-13, Luke 19:11-27

Monday 11/23

Psalm 106, Joel 3:2, 9-17
1 Peter 1:1-12, Matthew 19:1-12

Tuesday 11/24

Psalm 120, 127, Nahum 1:1-13
1 Peter 1:13-25,
Matthew 19:13-22

Wednesday 11/25

Psalm 119:145-176, 128, 129, 130
Obadiah 15-21
1 Peter 2:1-10, Matthew 19:23-30

Thursday 11/26 *Thanksgiving*

Psalm 133, 134, 135
Zephaniah 3:1-13
1 Peter 2:11-25
Matthew 20:1-16

Friday 11/27

Psalm 140, 141, 142, 143
Isaiah 24:14-23
1 Peter 3:13-4:6
Matthew 20:17-28

Saturday 11/28

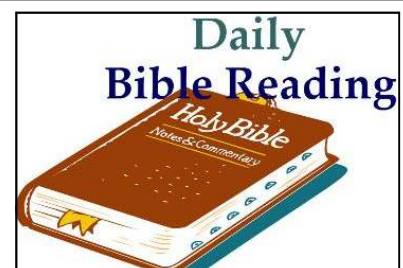
Psalm 104, 137, 144
Micah 7:11-20
1 Peter 4:7-19
Matthew 20:29-34

Sunday 11/29

Psalm 111, 112, 113, 147
Isaiah 1:1-9
2 Peter 3:1-10, Matthew 25:1-13

Monday 11/30

Psalm 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, Isaiah 1:10-20
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Luke 20:1-8



History of a Hymn

We Gather Together

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

1597

*So the nations shall fear the name of the Lord, And all the kings of the earth
Your glory. Psalm 102:15 (NKJV)*

Those who have visited the Netherlands with its picturesque dikes and windmills may be unaware of the terrific struggles for religious freedom that took place there in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1555, the low country was given to King Philip II of Spain by his father, Emperor Charles V of Germany. Philip was an arch-Catholic, but the winds of Calvinistic Reformation had reached the Netherlands. Roman Catholic churches were plundered, and the authority of Spain was resisted.

In 1557, King Philip sent the dreaded Duke of Alba (Fernando Alvarez de Toledo) to bring the Netherlands back into the Pope's fold. He established a reign of terror during which ten thousand people were executed and another forty thousand exiled. His ruling counsel was called the "Council of Troubles," but it's better known to history as the "Blood Council." Alba didn't hesitate to massacre whole cities. An attack on Leiden was stopped only by cutting the dikes and flooding the countryside.

On January 6, 1579, the Catholic southern regions of the Netherlands (modern Belgium) declared their allegiance to Philip; but three weeks later the northern part (modern Holland) refused to submit to the Catholic rule of Spain. In 1581, Holland declared its independence, led by the courageous William of Orange. Holland was devastated by warfare, and in the process William was cut down by an assassin's dagger. But the brave nation would not be denied, and eventually Spain lost its hold on the Dutch Republic.

This hymn "We Gather Together", which Americans associate with their Thanksgiving holiday, was actually written sometime in 1597 to celebrate Holland's freedom from Spain. It's author, an unknown Dutchman, was full of thanksgiving that his people were finally free from Spanish tyranny and free to worship as they chose.

Notice how he expressed this theme in these three beautiful verses:

The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing...

*... so from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side, all glory be Thine!*

*We all do extol Thee, Thou Leader triumphant,
And pray that thou still our defender wilt be.*

*Let thy congregation escape tribulation:
Thy Name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!*



Methodist History

Susanna Wesley



On January 20, 1669, on Spital Yard, a narrow court in London, Susanna Annesley was born. She was the youngest of 25 children. In her girlhood, she witnessed the dying embers of a fire of persecution of the non-conformists. "The Act of Uniformity" of 1662, required every clergyman to declare his unfeigned assent to all and everything contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer. Her father, Dr. Annesley, was a minister, and on St. Bartholomew's Day, when the act went into effect, over 2,000 ministers bade farewell to their weeping congregations. They did not dare to worship God according to other men's consciences! They were forbidden to live within 5 miles of any place where they had preached. They were forbidden to teach any school, public or private. Worshippers who attended any other than the established form, or ever received the dissenting ministers in their homes, were heavily fined or imprisoned. The enforcement of the Acts was committed to the King's Soldiers. Over 5,000 died in prison for disobeying. In such an England, Susanna Annesley was born.

After the penalties of the Act of Uniformity had been suspended in 1672, Dr. Annesley took the ministry of a dissenting church in London. His hospitable door welcomed all who knocked, and his flock numbered a full score of attractive daughters. Young Samuel Wesley was a favorite guest. He came and came again, perhaps because he found Dr. Anseley's conversation very satisfying, or perhaps he found his daughter a beautiful and delightful companion.

Early one August morning, Samuel Wesley trudged afoot to Oxford to prepare for the regular ministry. Five years later he was ordained a deacon, and later a priest. The year 1688 saw him settled as a curate. He and Susanna Annesley were married soon after she turned eighteen.

For 2 years after their marriage they lived in lodgings in London. Here their first child, Samuel, was born. However, all the while her husband, Samuel, was doing the work of a servant in Oxford, Susanna was growing up among cultured companions. She was early initiated and instructed in the first principles of the Christian Religion. In girlhood, she received from the heart the form of doctrine from her father's lips. Her own rule as a girl was never to spend more time per day in worldly pleasures than she was willing to spend in private devotions.

In 1690, Samuel received the rectory of South Ormsby, a little village in Lincolnshire. His thorough-going honesty always stood in the way of his material progress. Susanna managed their small income so well the family did keep out of debt.

For 7 years they lived in South Ormsby. The church itself was attractive enough, but the rectory was a hut composed of reeds and clay. Here they had only 50 pounds a year to live on, and one child additional per year. Yet no one complained. Each new comer was welcomed. Susanna was a thrifty wife, making food fill many mouths.

Remember When...

November 7, 2004
Roof Loan
Mortgage Burning



November 22, 2009
Consecration Sunday
Steve Moser and Mindy Schulz
"Made Me Glad"

November 9, 2014
Children's Moments
Stump the Pastor



Connecting With ...

THANK YOU, FRIENDS.

We would like to thank the members of St. Paul's for your prayers, your texts, your phone calls, getting groceries and medications for us, delivering meals, etc. while we were down with the Covid-19 virus. You will never know how much that meant to us. As many of you know, Gary was hospitalized for four days with this and Deb was very sick at home. We certainly did not have mild cases, but we were blessed that it wasn't the worst-case scenario either. God heard your many prayers and answered them. "Lord my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me." Psalm 30:2. The fatigue we are still experiencing will be with us for quite some time yet from what we understand. But we look to each new day with anticipation of good things to come. Our prayers for each of you are that you remain safe, wear your masks, and practice social distancing.

Gary & Deb Hurd



New Address:

Jean Thomas
3003 Freyer Rd.
Elida, OH 45807



Congratulations to Jason and Jennifer (Piper) Morrison, on the birth of their son, Jacob Henry, born on Saturday, October 24. He weighed 7lbs. 8 oz. and 21 inches. He was welcomed home by his brothers and sister. Proud grandparents are Tim and Corinne Piper and great grandparent Jean Thomas.

Congratulations to Jordan and Amy Wyant on the birth of their daughter, Sutton Christine, born on Sunday, October 25. she weighed 5 lbs. 13 oz. She was welcomed home by her big sisters. Proud grandparents are Jamie and Jan Wyant.

The People of St. Paul's

Jack and I are so blessed to be a part of your church family. Thanks to all your prayers, love, comfort, and support as we traveled our unexpected issues!! Oh--our treats also!! What fun!

*Our Love to All,
Jack and Cindy*



Thank you very much for the flowers sent to me in the hospital. They really cheered up my room. Thanks also for the cards I received.

*Thanks,
Jean*

Dear Friends at St. Paul's, Thanks very much for the sack of sunshine you left on our front porch. It was indeed a ray of sunshine. Thanks again to all of you for remembering us.

*Sincerely,
Jim and Carolyn Michael*

Dear Pastor Paul, My sister treasured her St. Paul's family, and we are truly appreciative of all the prayers and visits during her brief illness. I remember the friends she greeted the time I was fortunate to join her a year ago at one of your "Senior Luncheons". One of so many memories I treasure with my sister. She was indeed a special person and will be greatly missed—My last sibling here on earth, now with our other two sisters, all of us P. K's to the end!

*Thank you all again!
Miriam and Ike Zimmerman*

St. Paul United Methodist Church, We want to express our appreciation for the monthly luncheons you have. Madeleine and Dick Armstrong are dear friends of Lavonne and Rudy Segovia. Madeleine passed away Sept. 11, and for the past year, Lavonne and Rudy shared their luncheon meals from your church with Dick and Madeleine. It was a very thoughtful fellowship.

*With gratitude,
The Armstrong Family*



Remember in Prayer

<i>Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital</i>	Gary Hurd Jean Thomas
<i>Homebound Members</i>	Hazel Dunn Glenna Kohli
<i>Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement</i>	
<i>In the Military</i>	Nathan Stewart

Meetings

November 2, 2020
PPR Mtg... 7:00 PM

November 3, 2020
Trustees...7:00 PM

November 4, 2020
Worship Mtg.10:00 AM

November 9, 2020
**Ad Council/Finance..
 7:00 PM**

No Missions Mtg.

**Sundays
 Worship...10:00 AM**

NOVEMBER

2020

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1 Margie Best Cody Warris	2	3 Holly Cook Jacinda Perry Dalton Poling	4	5	6	7 Jone Lane
8	9 Jonathan Cook Joshua Guess	10 Kylee Loose	11 Virginia Hollar Jenson Nagy	12 Logan House	13 Dillon Staas	14
15	16	17	18 Dennis Bowsher	19 Audrey Cook Gary Grigg	20 Brinley Edwards Brody Edwards Rudy Segovia Marty White	21
22 Christie Lewis Tony Lozano Samantha Whetstone	23 Piper Kinney Jennifer Loose Tony Shoup	24	25	26	27 Terry Bok	28
29	30					

November
ANNIVERSARIES

Justin & Marisa Kruse
November 4

Bruce & Tammy Segovia
November 16; 41 yrs.

*May the Bounty
 of the Season
 FILL YOUR HEART
 AND HOME*

Recipes from St. Paul's Great Cooks

Pumpkin Cake Dessert

By Sue Theodore

Ingredients		Instructions
	Crust:	Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
1 box	Yellow cake mix	Prepare crust, reserve 1 cup cake mix. Spread in 9x13 baking dish.
1 stick	Margarine, melted	
1	Egg, beaten	Mix together filling and pour over crust.
	Filling:	Add reserved cake mix to topping ingredients. Crumble over filling.
1 can, large	Pumpkin	Bake for 10 minutes; turn oven down to 350 degrees, bake 35 minutes. Let cool.
1 tsp.	Cinnamon	
3/4 Cup	Sugar	Serve with whipped cream.
2/3 cup	Evaporated milk	Store leftovers in refrigerator.
3	Eggs, beaten	
	Topping:	
1 tsp.	Cinnamon	
2 Tbl.	Margarine, softened	
1/2 cup	Nuts, chopped	



Pumpkin Whip

By Corinne Piper

Ingredients		Instructions
1 pkg. small	Butterscotch pudding, instant	Mix pudding and milk for 2 minutes.
1 1/2 cup	Milk	Add pumpkin and spice. Mix well.
1 cup	Pumpkin, canned	Fold in Cool Whip.
1 tsp.	Pumpkin pie spice	Refrigerate until time to use.
1 1/2 cup	Cool Whip	



KIDZ KORNER

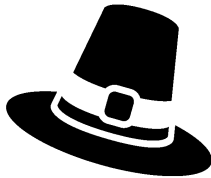
A taste of history

Add a yummy, authentic touch to your Thanksgiving meal with this recipe.



What you need:

- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- pint jar with lid
- strainer
- bowl
- container
- salt



What you do:

1. Pour cream into the jar and close the lid tightly.
2. Shake vigorously about 8 minutes, until a solid lump of butter forms. (Take turns with a friend!)
3. Strain the contents, catching the buttermilk in a bowl to save for another recipe.
4. Put the butter in a container. Add salt to taste.
5. After chilling the butter, enjoy on fresh bread.

PUZZLE

Glad gatherings

The first Christians met together over a meal. Today church families still gather to break bread and thank God.

Follow the instructions below. Then write the remaining words in order from left to right and top to bottom to complete the verses.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	They	found	broke	bread	acts	in
2	houses	their	homes	beautiful	and	round
3	ate	world	beginning	together	follow	thought
4	with	numbers	glad	happiness	lesson	and
5	thanks	sincere	disciples	gathering	hearts	tradition
6	celebrate	good	praising	Christian	God	river

Cross out all words in column E with double letters.

Cross out all words that are books of the Bible.

Cross out all words in column B that end in d.

Cross out all words in column A that have more than 4 letters.

Cross out all words in row 5 with 3 syllables.

Cross out all words in the table with 9 letters.

Cross out all words in column F with 2 or more vowels.

ACTS 2:46-47, NIV

Answer: They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God. Acts 2:46-47, NIV

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

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Our Web Address:
www.elidastpaulschurch.org

Our Facebook page
Elida St. Paul's Church

Twitter Account
@ESPCHURCH



Living Our Faith

Strangers No More

Some people open their holiday meals to strangers, and one host even did so inadvertently. In 2016, Wanda Dench texted 17-year-old Jamal Hinton about Thanksgiving dinner, thinking she was contacting her grandson. When a skeptical Hinton requested a photo and received a selfie of someone with a different skin color, he chuckled — but then asked if he could still come eat! Thus began a new friendship and a new annual tradition, which Hinton documents online. “Family is more than blood,” says Dench. “It’s the people you want to be with.”

This year’s meal will be bittersweet, with an empty chair for Dench’s husband, who died of Covid-19 in April. To show support after that loss, Hinton sent his “grandma” a collection of loving video messages. Strangers worldwide expressed condolences to a woman who’d fully embraced a stranger.

Growing Through Gratitude

Thankfulness, studies show, has multiple physical, mental and emotional benefits. Psychologist Robert Emmons calls gratitude “fertilizer for the mind” because of its powerful effects.

He admits gratitude isn’t always easy — especially when life throws us curveballs (see the year 2020) — but says it can be most helpful during and after difficulties. Emmons suggests reframing challenges using thankfulness-based language. Ask, for example: Though I wasn’t grateful for the experience at the time, how can I be now? What lessons did I learn, and how did I grow as a person?

Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul reframes his extensive sufferings and urges us to do the same. “Give thanks in all circumstances,” he writes, “for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV).