

The Link

January 2023

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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Interim Pastor's Page



Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.

— Henri Nouwen —

AZ QUOTES

Happy New Year!

We have a lot of new things on the horizon as a part of the Body of Christ. There are three issues I want to highlight.

The first thing we will be doing in the new year is to begin the process of addressing financial issues. Please take some time to look at the more thorough financial summary page,

and read the narrative explanation of how our church is funded. For those who want more detailed information, the Annual Reports booklet will be available in the next week or so in advance of the January 22nd Annual Meeting following worship. We do have a substantial drain on the General Fund, the Council has begun the process of addressing this by reducing the budget for 2023, a difficult task with 9% inflation. The trustees have accomplished some major projects, security cameras, lighting, better wireless access, and entry doorway projects! We are grateful for their skill and leadership! This has depleted the Building Fund cushion that St Paul is used to having. And there has been a substantial strain on the Pastor's discretionary Fund, many folks who have never needed assistance are turning to the church for help. We are lucky that we have the resources to help.

The second renewed work is to begin to follow up on the many hopes and dreams raised in the all-church retreat. More small groups were a priority for many folks who attended. You will see that the Transition Team has announced a new initiative, Dine to Shine, to partially address small group fellowship. For now, it will also continue our assessment of what all members of St Paul find spiritually satisfying, what traditions are important to continue, and



True Hospitality is welcoming the stranger on her own terms. This kind of hospitality can only be offered by those who've found the center of their lives in their own hearts.

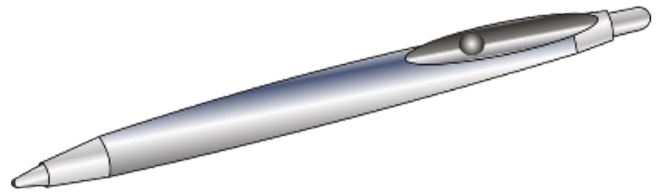
Henri Nouwen

AZ QUOTES

what dreams we may have for new initiatives. This information will be helpful for the Pastoral Search Committee as they look for our new "settled" pastor. Please consider signing up to attend one of the dinners. Everyone, pray to bless the efforts of both of these important committees. Really! Pray for them, pray for the renewal of your church!

The third initiative is to begin to have adult Bible Studies. I will be holding a group at 8:30 a.m. Sunday mornings, beginning January 29th, for 4 weeks. The topic will be the Biblical understanding Hospitality. This is much more than entertaining friends in our homes. It is God's command to welcome "strangers." Hebrews 13:2 "**Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.**" I hope you will consider attending! Hopefully these quotes from Henri Nouwen will encourage you. Happy New Year!

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN...



It has been four years since I joined Church Council, three as your president. Just where has the time gone?

I want to thank you for allowing me to serve on Council. As president I have tried to lead this church, along with other council and staff members in ways that helped us continue to be a stronger, better church and one that God would be proud. And that path has not always been easy, or smooth especially when we entered the season of “no settled” pastor.

Whether my time as your council president has been successful is left to you and God to decide. I am only proud that I was blessed to have an opportunity to try to make a difference among God’s people and children.

The coming year will likely prove to be as challenging as last year. While we have an “interim” pastor, the search to find a more “settled” pastor who can be among us for a long while seems allusive. Church Council and its new leadership will need your continued support and patience as they navigate these “transitional” times. Only God seems to know the timeline we are on during this transition, so your patience and faith are needed now more than ever.

Again, my thanks for allowing me to serve you.

Blessings to you always,

Mark



YOUR CHURCH COUNCIL IN ACTION...

December 12, 2022 Meeting Highlights

- ◆ Meeting was called to order by Mark Vaughn, President at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Hearing of the Members: None were present.
- ◆ Council approved the minutes to the meeting of November 14, 2022.
- ◆ Council approved the Treasurer's report as presented.
- ◆ Council approved a transfer of funds to finish paying for work done to the office doors.
- ◆ Council approved rededicating a dormant music endowment, created and controlled by Council to become the Faith Formation Endowment; this was done to provide the Faith Formation Committee a consistent supply of funds to continue its ministry.
- ◆ Council also approved that the Faith Formation Committee may use NO MORE than 4% of the Endowment's balance each church calendar year.
- ◆ Council entered into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and church finances. No formal action was taken during the executive session.
- ◆ Council approved the following items after returning from Executive Session:
 - Approved a 5% pay increase for all church employees, except the custodian and interim pastor.
 - Approved the budget for the General Fund and will send this to a vote by Congregation at the January Annual Meeting.
 - Approved the tentative budgets for Faith Formation Committee, Living Endowment Committee, and Music Department.
- ◆ Trustees report includes the following:
 - The trustees requested Council approve the payment for the new doors to Mechanic Street and the Church Office.
- ◆ The Personnel Committee had no report for this month.
- ◆ Due to the length of the Executive Session, all other reports and updates to Council were tabled until January.
- ◆ Meeting adjourned with the Common Calling at 9:45 p.m.

SPECIAL FEATURE:

“Understanding the Church Budget”

St. Paul United Church of Christ has been fortunate to have been blessed by generous giving and donations. Sometimes this generosity makes us forget the actual “nuts and bolts” spending that it actually takes to operate a church. Below is an explanation of how our church’s finances work and how your contributions... especially weekly/monthly make a difference in the work of our church. This is a long article, but please be patient and read this important information, as it may answer many questions you may have had regarding our church’s finances.

The church budget is made up of **TWO** major categories: **Endowments** and **General Fund**. Each of these categories has its own life-line so to speak; they are like parallel train tracks, going in the same direction, but not crossing, supporting and guiding the train to its destination.

Endowments are funds that have been generously given to our church by donors, estates, previous, past, and current members. Endowments have been set up for a “special” purpose. For example, the Mission Committee Endowment is just for that... the work of the Mission Committee and nothing else. If the roof suddenly needed replaced in the Sanctuary, money from this endowment COULD NOT be used in an emergency because the roof replacement is not a responsibility of the Mission Committee. Thus, it is illegal to use the funds dedicated in the Mission Endowment for anything but the Mission Committee. Endowments have very strict guidelines that prevent the funds in the Endowment from being used for purposes other than what the money was dedicated... period.

Only endowments, such as the Building Fund, for example, can be used at Council discretion, but again, it is only to repair and maintain the church facilities... you can’t just decide to buy a church van with building fund monies, as the endowment forbids such expenditures. Most endowments are not in the realm of control by Church Council. For example, Church Council cannot tell the Mission Committee how to spend, where to spend, and when to spend money in their endowment; it is against the rules. In short, endowments are sometimes large sums of money in special accounts that only can be used for the purpose(s) they have been dedicated towards and by the committee or group that is specified in the endowment’s regulations.

All endowments, with the exception of the Building Fund, have a restriction on the amount of money that may be spent in a year’s time. Usually this is 4% of the total funds in the endowment, and in most cases is a year’s interest (depending on the economy). The purpose of these restrictions is to help the money last longer and hopefully over generations of members. The restrictions help make sure funds may always be available in the future.

ALL of St. Paul’s major ministries – Food, Music, Children’s Programing (FEAST) are run using endowment funds. The purchase of the church van and its promotional lettering was also done with grant money from the federal government.

“Understanding the Church Budget”

Continued

The General Fund is the amount of money that the church receives from its members, grants, donations from the community, etc. This money is not like an endowment, which has the potential to last for generations and grow with proper investment... this money is the yearly money needed to operate this church on a daily basis. The General Fund is the money needed to do the “business” part of our ministries for God.

Things like the utilities – water, sewer, electric, gas, refuse, salaries for church staff, salary and benefits for the pastor, worship supplies, office supplies, cleaning supplies, etc. are the things that money from the General Fund is used for... in short the “nuts and bolts” items needed to keep the church functioning on a daily basis. The General Fund does not support the ministries of this church; endowments do that.

While the Piel Fund, a special endowment, is used to supplement our general fund as allowed by the endowment’s rules, the amount that can be taken from it is restricted by the 4% rule. Regardless of the church’s balance sheet at the end of a year, no more than 4% can be used to supplement the General Fund. Council cannot change this; this is how the investment was set up many years ago when it was donated to St. Paul.

Lately, what is being used from the Piel Fund **does not** cover the difference between the contributions given by the congregation and expenditures. A large reason for this shortfall has to do with a drop in weekly donations, which has been happening since the beginning of 2022. The perception that our church does not need a very strong weekly or monthly giving because of the Piel Fund is unfortunately incorrect. This perception may have been correct several years ago, when St. Paul experienced stronger weekly/monthly giving, but is no longer true today. Strong weekly giving makes a **HUGE** difference to the ability of St. Paul to continue its vital ministries to its members and the community.

Both Endowments and our General Fund work together, much like a train track, supporting the train, and leading the train to its next destination. Both Endowments and the General Fund support this church in meaningful ways that help us continue the journey that God has for us. Your continued support of our church will help us reach the next destination in this spiritual journey together.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SET... Please Plan on Attending... Church Dinner Served After

Please mark your calendar for this very important Sunday... **January 22, 2023.** On this Sunday we will be having the Annual Congregational Meeting after worship service. Your attendance is greatly needed so we may conduct the annual church business that requires your vote as mandated by our church's constitution. We need to have a quorum present to do business, which at this time is at least 57 members. Important business that we have to complete together as a congregation include the election of two new members to Church Council, the reelection of members whose terms have expired and are willing to serve another term, and the approval of the church budgets. And all of this needs you!!! Following the church meeting will be another church social meal provided by Chef Tami and Mark.

DON'T MISS BEING PART OF YOUR CHURCH, A GREAT MEAL, AND AWESOME SOCIALIZATION WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS – SEE YOU ALL ON THE 22ND!!!!



From the Transition Team – Dine to Shine

We realized at the retreat that the “Dine with 9” had a special place in the hearts of our congregation. Beginning in January, we would like to bring it back to life with an important purpose!

Dining together is a wonderful setting to share our hopes and dreams for the future of our church and to celebrate the blessing that the church has been in each of our lives. We will be sharing the starting dates, January 8th when the signup sheets will be available in the breeze way. Below are some details that we would like to share!

- ◆ We would like to keep the diners to 6 or 7, for a more intimate gathering.
- ◆ We plan for a member of the transition team to be present. This will enable us to hear the hopes and dreams for St. Paul UCC going forward and we will share this information with the Search Committee.

The current purpose is temporary, as is the Transition Team. The meals we hope will evolve into something that truly blesses our congregation.

Signup sheets will be in the breeze way January 8th!

For more information, after January 8th, please call Jennifer Frische, 419-231-3790.



General Fund

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| General Fund Monthly Budget | \$ 33,020.54 |
| General Fund Actual Expenditures | \$ 28,203.32 |
| Given to General Fund | \$ 26,547.87 |
| 4th Quarter Piel Endowment Transfer | \$ 14,686.61 |
| Gain in General Fund for December | \$ 13,846.89 |
| Given to Benevolences | \$ 1,422.00 |
| Given to Building Fund | \$ 2,200.63 |

Year to Date

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| General Fund <u>Budget</u> Year to Date | \$396,246.48 |
| General Fund <u>Actual</u> Expenditures <u>Last Year</u> | \$358,513.00 |
| General Fund <u>Actual</u> Expenditures <u>This Year</u> to Date | \$350,594.30 |
| General Fund Van purchase | \$29,000.00 |
| Given to General Fund Year to Date | \$209,717.30 |
| All 4 Quarters of Piel Endowment Transfers | \$58,746.44 |
| Total General Fund Income this year | \$268,463.74 |
| Net drain in the General Fund for 2022 | \$85,842.19 |
| Given to Benevolence Fund Year to Date | \$ 10,217.63 |
| Given to Building Fund Year to Date | \$ 9,553.63 |

Benevolence Giving for January ~ Crisis Center



Meetings and Events

TAKE-OUT TUESDAY MEALS TO RESUME...

After a much needed break, our Take-Out Tuesday Meals will resume on **January 10, 2023!**

Please contact Tami Zwez if you **DO NOT** want a meal; all people who were registered for a meal prior to our December Holiday Break are still registered and will receive a meal. Meal pick-up times and location are the same! Looking forward to serving you beginning January 10th!

FAITH FORMATION TEAM

The Faith Formation Team will be meeting on Monday, January 2 2023 at 6:30PM. We will be planning to start up FEAST for the winter session and Heifer Sunday. All Are Welcome!!!!

GUMBO SALE

We had some supplies left over after our shrimp boil, so we decided to make some Southern Gumbo!!! Cooked fresh then frozen. (Shrimp, Sausage, potato, rice) We are selling 1-Pint for \$5.00 and 1-Quart for \$10.00. Come enjoy this Louisiana Favorite!! Call the church office at 419-738-2215 for pick-up during church hours, while supplies last.

2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2023 offering envelopes are ready. If you have not gotten yours yet, stop by the church office to pick your up. If you don't want your envelopes please call and let Cindy in the office know.

WEEK OF PRAYER

The week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be Wednesday, January 18th through Wednesday, January 25, 2023.

WAMA

Wapakoneta Area Ministerial Association (WAMA) broadcast on Facebook on Wednesday, January 18, 2023.

FEAST NEWS

The FEAST program will start January 18, 2023. This session of FEAST will last till Wednesday, March 29, 2023. Anyone interested in attending please call Tami at 419-738-2215.

FLOWER CHART

There is a new flower chart in the breezeway. Please take the time to look it over and fill in any date that would work for you.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 16, 2023 for Martin Luther King Jr Day..

TAKING DOWN THE GREENS

We will be taking down the greens after service on Sunday, January 8, 2023. Anyone able and willing to help please plan to stay after service that day. Thank you in advance.

Our Church Family


Baptisms

Kellen Robert Stahler, born September 6, 2022. Kellen parents are Lauren (Hengstler) & Landan Stahler. Grandparents: Steve & Roberta Hengstler & Doug & Kelly Stahler.

Violet Mae Zwez, born March 22, 2022. Violet parent is Amy Zwez. Grandmother: Tami Zwez & Grandparents: John & Deb Zwez.

Happy Anniversary!!

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 01/01/2015 | Michael & Michelle Foulkes |
| 01/05/1980 | Jack Sr. & Cindy Preston |
| 01/06/1972 | Mark & Susan Bishop |
| 01/16/2010 | Nathan & Rudy Elizabeth Mathewson |
| 01/18/1997 | Tom & Pat Schlenker |



HAPPY BIRTHDAY
to our
St. Paul Youth!

January

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| ✓ Kaylee Hawk | 1/09/2014 |
| ✓ Makenna Smith | 1/10/2006 |
| ✓ Madison Loy | 1/12/2009 |
| ✓ Braydon Wireman | 1/15/2010 |
| ✓ Lucas Steinke | 1/18/2012 |
| ✓ Callen Martin | 1/23/2014 |
| ✓ Noah McElroy | 1/24/2019 |
| ✓ Cate Allemeier | 1/25/2005 |

With caring thoughts.....

Our deepest sympathy and condolences of the passing of **June L. Holtzapple**, who is the mother of Devin Holtzapple. June passed on Monday, December 26, 2022.



Happy Birthday to you...

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 01/02 Dave Hibner | 01/15 Bernard Azbell |
| 01/04 Harold Werling | 01/16 Linda Coil |
| 01/04 Nathan Mathewson | 01/16 Zebrey Knoch |
| 01/05 Diane Schlenker | 01/17 Thomas Braun |
| 01/06 Jack Prater | 01/18 Linda Presar |
| 01/06 Wayne Quellhorst | 01/19 Jeff Zwiebel |
| 01/06 Janet Schuler | 01/19 Judy Zwiebel |
| 01/06 Erik Brautigam | 01/20 Larisa Sutton |
| 01/06 Emil George | 01/21 Don Warner |
| 01/06 Nathan Groh | 01/21 Amber Detrick |
| 01/07 Kay Wellington | 01/21 Carolyn Perez |
| 01/07 Dan Bennett | 01/22 Jack Acheson |
| 01/07 Benjamin Warner | 01/22 Steve Nuesmeyer |
| 01/09 Ellen Brautigam | 01/23 Audra Schaub |
| 01/09 Toby Shaw | 01/22 James Hearn Sr. |
| 01/10 Ellen Brautigam | 01/24 Carly Jarvis |
| 01/12 Emerson Recob | 01/24 Lori Schroer |
| 01/12 Jerry Clark | 01/24 Maggie Bowsher |
| 01/12 Anne Bennett | 01/28 Mike Schaub |
| 01/14 Mikayla Halfhill | 01/29 Tara Johnston |
| 01/14 Louise Jung | 01/31 Caitlin Wiedenbein |
| 01/14 Ian Wiedenbein | |



January 2023



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | | | | |
| <i>1</i> 10:15AM Worship w/Communion | <i>2</i> Church Office Closed | <i>3</i> No Take Out Tuesday Meals 6:00PM Faith Formation Meet- ing | <i>4</i> 6:30PM Bell Choir Practice 7:30PM Choir Practice | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>7</i> |
| <i>8</i> 10:15AM Worship 11:30PM Taking Down the Greens 2-4:00PM Confirmation Class | <i>9</i> 6:30PM Church Council Meeting | <i>10</i> 5-6:00PM Take Out Tuesday Meals 6:30PM Mission Committee Meeting | <i>11</i> 6:30PM Bell Choir Practice 7:30PM Choir Practice | <i>12</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>14</i> |
| <i>15</i> 10:15AM Worship | <i>16</i> Church Office Closed 6:30PM Pastoral Search Commit- tee Meeting Martin Luther King, Jr. Day | <i>17</i> 5-6:00PM Take Out Tuesday Meals 6:30PM Transition Team Meeting | <i>18</i> 3-5:30PM FEAST 6:30PM Bell Choir Practice 7:30PM Choir Practice | <i>19</i> 6-8:00PM Video Series Study | <i>20</i> | <i>21</i> |
| <i>22</i> 10:15AM Worship Cong. Meeting after service w/ Church Dinner Confirmation Class Attending meeting & staying after | <i>23</i> 6:00PM Policy & Procedures Meeting | <i>24</i> 5-6:00PM Take Out Tuesday Meals | <i>25</i> 3-5:30PM FEAST 6:30PM Bell Choir Practice 7:30PM Choir Practice | <i>26</i> 10-12:00 Noon West Ohio Food Distribution @ Cty Engineer Garage 6-8:00PM Video Series Study | <i>27</i> | <i>28</i> |
| <i>29</i> 8:30AM Adult Bible Study begins 10:15AM Worship w/Lane Warner Parker Baptism | <i>30</i> | <i>31</i> 5-6:00PM Take Out Tuesday Meals | | | | |

St. Paul United Church of Christ

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Church Office


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ST. PAUL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Wapakoneta, Ohio

Our MISSION

As a congregation of God's people, we welcome and encourage all to join in fellowship, joyful and inspirational worship and faithful stewardship. United in Christ, we support and nurture one another in personal development and spiritual growth. We strive to reflect Christ's Love and to spread God's Word throughout our community and the world.

**IN-PERSON
SERVICES**
WEEKLY AT 10:15AM
also
available on the church
Website:
www.stpaulucc.com
or our Facebook page:
[www.facebook.com/
StPaulWapakoneta/](http://www.facebook.com/StPaulWapakoneta/)

HAPPY NEW YEARS