



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL

December 2019

Inside this Issue:

Ponderings from the Pastor	1-2
Gifts to the Church	3
News & Updates	3-7
SPY News	6
Scout News/Nursery School News	8
Birthdays	9
Remember in Prayer	10
Calendar	11

For an electronic version of THE EPISTLE, please visit our website at:
www.stpaulnch.com

*St. Paul United
Church of Christ
6997 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH
45231*

Ph. 513-931-2205
Fax 513-931-2206
Email:
office@stpaulnch.com
Website:
www.stpaulnch.com

Worship Opportunities

Sundays:

9:50 AM Traditional
Worship in Sanctuary
Sunday School

LABOR (WAITING) PAINS



Advent is perhaps one of the most misunderstood seasons in the church year. We meet it every year, and yet it always seems like the world around us rolls straight from Thanksgiving to Christmas ...especially this year, with less than a month between Thanksgiving and Christmas! In our culture today there is NO

WAITING (and there hasn't been for many years now): we move straight from Halloween to the celebration of Christmas, with barely a pause for Thanksgiving. Christmas stuff appears in some stores in September. *sigh*

But Advent is what grounds Christmas in reality. Because the truth is that in many moments in our lives we are waiting. We are waiting for the six people ahead of us to move up in the Kroger checkout line...three of whom are writing checks. We're waiting for that phone call from the doctor...from the lawyer...from that out-of-town loved one (who's several weeks late in calling). We are waiting for hope in a world that often feels full of uncertainty. We are waiting for love in places where we carry hurt and shame. We are waiting for long labor and planning to bear fruit with a "new thing," a new beginning. We are waiting for our world to reflect God's dreams, for it to be a place of safety, freedom, peace, and justice for all...for our daily reality to reflect full-blown Divine Reality.

Advent meets us where we are, in the midst of uncertainty and in the midst of the waiting, and reminds us that waiting is not a barrier to God. It reminds us that God acts in the midst of waiting, in the midst of the mess and the broken. It reminds us that we look not for a big, triumphant flourish of light and hope that will neatly wrap all our problems up with a bow. Quite the opposite, in fact. Instead, we look for the little signs of love and peace, we look for the tiny baby born, a sign that at first glance looks like nothing out of the ordinary, but is a truly extraordinary sign of God's tender love among us. But...do we see it?

This Advent, we wait once again. Waiting is a kind of holy slowing down. It's a way of seeing the ways we yearn for tenderness, for the kind of love that truly is unconditional....for God to ACT in our lives ...which God surely does, all the time (every nanosecond of every day!). But...are we aware of it?

Most of time it would seem we are not. Perhaps this is why we see, over and over again in the Bible, the human cry "How long, O Lord? How LONG?" (cf. Psalms 13, 35, 79, 80, 89, 90, 94, and many places in the Prophets). There are tons of spots in scripture literally soaked with yearning. With this in mind, I want to suggest this year, for this Advent, we use this time of waiting to consider waiting from another perspective: from God's perspective. God does at least as much waiting upon us as we do waiting for God. Indeed, a whole lot more. Indeed, maybe this is really why we need Advent—to reorient us, so that we can see once again God humbly waiting on us, without fanfare or complaining...in a feed trough.

Ponderings From The Pastor (continued)

Remember after all what Christmas is all about; behind all the parties, celebrations, pageants, stories, fables, carols, traditions, feasts, decorations, Hallmark movies, cards, trees, lights, tinsel, a billion tons of bling and glitz and Black Friday hullabaloo, Christmas is simple. It is EMMANUEL: GOD WITH US... Already. ALREADY!! Available. Always. Arrived. Apparent. Attentive. Abundant. Abounding. Adoring. Accepting. Accompanying. Accessible...Present to us, in us. Incarnate...not just (or only) in Jesus, but in YOU. Indwelling. And Embracing...and waiting for you and for all of us to notice, to get over ourselves, our egos, our agendas, our fears, our doubts, our excuses, our failures...all the ways we PUSH away and KEEP our Indwelling Creator at arm's length...and then, when we realize we're doing that, we use the resulting (and convenient) guilt to increase the perceived (but unreal, non-existent) distance to push God away even further. Except that...we CAN'T! We cannot push EMMANUEL away from us. Never. God is really stubborn on this...I guess from all the waiting God does! God will NEVER leave or abandon you.

Back to Advent. How can you engage God's indwelling love and grace in this time of holy slow down, in a season that is often so busy? First, we can all use it as a path to seeing the ways we miss the mark, both intentionally or unintentionally... slowing down our thoughts long enough to catch the frequent judgments we make without even noticing, about others, about ourselves, and about God. Advent is a way of slowing down so that we can "practice the Presence" of God.

And yes, I know: at first that seems like some strenuous, high and mighty, maybe even impossible spiritual task, one we don't feel capable of even in the slightest. But it needn't be strenuous, at least not to get started. It's certainly not meant to be. Since God is indwelling and incarnate, so then is Divine Love and power...already IN US, a pure and limitless reservoir of grace and hope, just waiting for us to take a good, long drink. All we need to access that "living water" is prayer, praise, and purpose! Maybe it looks like this: to show respect and tenderness to those around us. To see others and treat others—including our church brothers and sisters—as co-equal bearers of the Divine Presence...because they are! Maybe that looks like inviting someone who might be lonely over for dinner or coffee. Maybe that looks like taking the time to notice God in the faces of those you walk past in the store. Maybe that looks like taking a few minutes each morning in silent prayer, not speaking but just sitting aware of God's presence. Maybe it means starting each new day reflecting that it was the Child of the Manger—right before he became the Crucified Child—who said, "Love ONE ANOTHER as I have first loved YOU."

Who knows?...Christmas might get really REAL for you very fast this year.

Without all that much waiting!

Happy Holy-Days,
Pastor Barry

[With thanks to Pastor Chelsea Constant, Asbury United Methodist Church--Livermore, CA, for inspiring this article]



In Loving Memory

In Memory of Mary Lou Heiden

Janet Heiden

In Memory of Lucille Walters

Carole Ehling

In Memory of Marian Faller

Family of Marian

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

In Memory of Gerri Cooper

Kathy & Phil Cooper

Dorothy Kahle

William Lowes

Linda Woods

In Memory of Joyce Seesing

Family of Joyce

In Memory of Willard Maier

Erma Amrein

Carol & Mike Chalfin

Dorothy Kahle

Lois & Dick Manifold

JANUARY EPISTLE DEADLINE

The Epistle deadline for the January edition is Wednesday, December 18, 2019. Please submit the information either by email to Anne or drop it in the Epistle box in the main office. There is also a folder in the blue mail-box outside the office.



PLEASE HELP US with LIGHTS AND DOORS

On several occurrences lately, we have found an outside door unlocked. Please be sure to check doors before you leave, especially if you are the last one out.

Please do your diligence to make sure that the lights are off in the building when you leave.



GLOBAL SPIRITUALITY A Fall Adult Education Experience!

Join Pastor Barry on **Tuesdays at 7:30 PM** (Dec. 3 and Dec. 10) for **"Global Spirituality: A Look at the World's Major Religions."** As the holidays approach, a number of significant "HOLY" days—not just Christmas!—show up on the fall and winter calendar each year, for several major world religions. We'll look at our Christian "cousins" including Judaism and Islam, but also "eastern" religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism) and others. This will be an informative and enriching experience, open to all ages sixteen and above (meet in Fellowship Hall). Plan to come and join us for a new spin on "Happy Holidays!"



ALUMINUM CANS FOR SHOES

We are still collecting aluminum cans for shoes for the kids at North College Hill Elementary School. The can has been relocated to the right of the main office door. It is a big green can with wheels on it and a sign. Please save your cans and bring them to church! New business' are helping this year to provide some great deals on shoes for the children.

THE PRAYER CHAIN NEEDS HELPERS

Our church prayer chain is in need of helpers who would be willing to help pray for those on the St. Paul prayer list. If you are interested and are willing to help pray, please let the office know or contact Ruth Hoeweler. Ruth would enjoy hearing from folks and could use some help. The blue special mission envelopes are in the pews as well.

**SAMARITAN'S PURSE
OPERATION SHOE BOX**

A big thank you to all who helped to provide items to fill the shoe boxes. A bigger thank you to all the Scouts and their leaders who very enthusiastically and thoughtfully packed **58** shoe boxes in an hour. And finally an even bigger thank you to all who help to provide the shipping cost to be able to send all 58 shoe boxes.

Also want to thank the Nursery School for donating their half of the \$150 raised from the Dine to Donate at Krimmers. And many thanks to all those who went to Krimmer's to eat and raised the money.

It has been a very successful year for the shoe boxes, and we know that Evelyn would be looking down on St. Paul with pride at a job well done.

All the boxes have been delivered to the location where they will be shipped to North Carolina and then off to the many children around the world.

Thank you all for helping to put a smile on a child's face this year.

Linda Woods

**MANY THANKS TO OUR
GIFTING ANGELS**

Many thanks to Erma Amrein and to Dot Kahle who donated funds towards the purchase of a new vacuum cleaner. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

WORKS ORDERS

If you have a special project that you need the help of Jim or Anne, or something that needs to be taken care of, please fill out a WORK ORDER. These are located on the kiosk table in the Narthex.

They should be turned in to the office. If you need something by a specific date, please be sure to give them enough time to complete what is needed. They will be sure to work it into their schedule in as timely a manner as possible.

Thanks so much.



FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Paul-United-Church-of-Christ-NCH/451020504934791>.



The Coat Drive so far has been a huge success. Channel 9 came out as well and interviewed some folks who attend our weekly dinner, talked with Judy Boyce and Pastor Barry. Some great footage aired of the Team sorting and working with the many items and helping people to get a coat.

They are keeping track each week of how many coats they have handed out to those in need. At the dinner on November 19, they were able to provide 25 coats to those in need.

There has been many people who have dropped off coats since seeing the news story. There has been another donation of \$100 for this mission.

Thank you everyone for helping. Coats, gloves, scarves, hats, and socks can be dropped off until January 31, 2019.

SPY HAPPENINGS

Friday, November 29, SPY will be gathering that afternoon early. They will be headed to the Zoo for the Festival of Lights. Afterwards they will come back to church and have their last Lock In of the year. On Saturday morning after breakfast, they are headed to Home Depot to make Christmas ornaments.

December 15th is the Christmas Play. This is starring not only some of our youth, but some of our adults. Please be sure to come see their performance during worship. SPY will be providing breakfast that morning as well after worship. So please join them in Fellowship Hall for some fellowship. After the breakfast, SPY will be having their Christmas Party. Games, snacks and surprises are planned.

They will be working on getting some more events scheduled after the first of the year.



On Sunday, November 3, Memorial Sunday, we had a special dedication of the new tree that has been planted in the front courtyard. This tree is to HONOR Pete and Erma Amrein.

Thank you Erma for everything that you and Pete have done for St. Paul United Church of Christ.

Thank you SPY for all the work you completed in the front courtyard and also for planting this beautiful tree.



SCHOOL SPIRIT TASTES GREAT



Make dinner a selfless act by joining us for a fundraiser to support St Paul Nursery School. Come in to the Chipotle at **9430-C Colerain Avenue** in Cincinnati on **Wednesday, December 11th** between **5:00pm** and **9:00pm**. Bring in this flyer, show it on your smartphone or tell the cashier you're supporting the cause to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to St Paul Nursery School.



Online orders will not be included in the fundraiser total. To ensure your purchase is counted in the fundraiser, be sure to order and pay in-restaurant. Gift card purchases during fundraisers do not count towards total donated sales, but purchases made with an existing gift card will count.

SCOUTING NEWS

The Cubbies have been working on advancements and also learning some cooking skills.

The Boy and Girl Troops have also been busily working on requirements for their ranks.



The Crew, and both Troops went to Mammoth Cave in November and had a great time. They went on two cave tours, Historic Tour and Domes and Dripstones. Did you know that there is over 400 miles of caves that have been founded and mapped? They just recently found 13 more and are still exploring that to see where it goes. The history of Mammoth Caves goes back to before 1828. It was land originally purchased by a doctor. His slave, Steven Bishop, found a natural opening to the cave on his property. They began exploring the cave and began tours even back then. The doctor, Dr. Croghan, developed a "area" down in the cave where he was treating tuberculosis patients. Steven Bishop eventually became free and stayed on the property after Dr. Croghan died. Dr. Croghan, Steven, a few tour guides and several of the patients have a cemetery on the property near the Welcome Center.

All of the Scouts will be having a Christmas dinner and a Court of Honor in December and then each group will be having a small gift exchange which has to be a scouting related item. They are looking forward to good food and a great time.

Nursery School

It's the time of the year when everyone is so busy, shopping, decorating, wrapping presents and baking cookies. No time to cook, NO problem.

Stop by Chipotle on Wednesday, December 11 from 5:00 to 9:00 PM to get some dinner and support both the Nursery School and the Church on their Dine to Donate. You can dine in or carry out. We will get 33% profit from the sales. All you have to do when ordering is show them your paper flyer, the flyer on your phone, or tell them you are with St. Paul Nursery School. (The flyer is on page 7 of this Epistle.)

Everyone helping is so appreciated and the Nursery School and the Church both benefit from this.

Merry Christmas and Blessings to you in the New Year!

Karen Rieman and Staff





12/6 Melissa Homes
Debra Nungester
12/11 Steve Rogers
Trecy Webb
12/14 Lynda Stagman

12/15 Carol Jensen
12/17 Charlotte McCauley
12/18 Janet Lerch
12/20 Cheryl Bartholomew
12/23 Terry DuPriest

12/26 Jesse McIlhaney
12/29 Lois Bates
12/29 Louise Pitcher
12/30 Vickie Bryant
12/30 Brian Tobergta



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1/3 Sharon Wagner
1/7 James Mueller
1/11 Nola Apro

1/15 Mary Heineke
1/18 Roy Push
1/25 Rick Davis

1/26 Charles Rogge
1/28 Kaleb Lewis
1/30 Paul Kluesener
Riley Overholts



2/2 Eileen Church
Carol Schroer
2/6 Vicki Celenza
Lois Manifold
2/9 Mandi Cornish

2/11 Robert Nungester
2/12 Erma Amrein
2/14 Bonnie Rogers
Patricia Sutton
2/15 Kim Ferry

2/15 Wm. Patrick Ferry
2/20 Sandy Schneeman
2/23 Barry Bordenkircher
2/25 Dotty Sunnenberg
2/29 Christy Spyers

Please Continue to Remember in Prayer:

Our servicemen and women
 Peggy Adams
 Chad Willcocks
 Melody Hoff
 Kathy Aker
 John Allen
 Alice Graber
 Don Beresford
 Tony Mancini
 Gay D. Smith
 Rev. Virginia Duffy
 Barbara Williamson
 Elaine Sloan
 Nancy Lanza
 Barb Walbrun
 James Stokes
 Tommy Moorehead
 Howard Seaman
 Lindsay Pitcher
 June Ward

Kim Caudell
 Clara Kemplin
 Rhonda Lahmann
 Joann Ernst
 Owen Erickson
 Marlene Sheward
 Justin Nuckols
 Bodde Scudder
 Bob Harbaum
 Greg Rice
 Barb Nuckols
 Norma Carrier
 Melitta Marx
 Jesse McIlhaney
 Ann Way
 Roy Push
 Carol Schroer
 Stan Wernz
 Charleigh Waltz and parents

Richard Boyce
 Barb Bruewer
 Barb Brewer
 Kostas Vasiliou
 Harper Manning
 Scott Ober
 Jennifer Nibouar
 Deborah Ehler
 Larry Estes
 Cathy Criswell
 Paul Kluesener
 The Cooper Family
 The Maier Family
 Lin Theders
 Deborah Byndon
 Rebecca Horning

Please keep the office informed on the status of those you have placed on the prayer list.

Please Continue to Remember in Prayer our HomeBound:

Bob Dickman
 Chris Hoeweller
 Albert Mueller
 Dot Sunnenberg
 Sharon Wagner



Doris Dunn
 Charlotte McCauley
 Herman Schleuter
 Anne Timme

Mary Heineke
 Ruth Meissner
 Gay Steinhauer
 Dolores Ungerbuehler

*If you would like to add
 someone to the prayer list,
 please call the office.*



December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Hanging of the Greens First Sunday of Advent	2 Scouts 6:30 pm	3 Dinner 5-6:30 pm Global Spirituality 7:30 PM	4	5	6 AA - 8 pm	7 Women's Luncheon 12 PM Fellowship Hall AA - 8 pm
8 Second Sunday of Advent	9 Scouts 6:30 pm	10 Dinner 5-6:30 pm Global Spirituality 7:30 PM	11 Executive Team Mtg. 5:30 pm Brownie Mtg. 6:30 pm	12	13 AA - 8 pm	14 AA - 8 pm
15 Third Sunday of Advent Christmas Play SPY Breakfast SPY Christmas Party	16 NS 3's Manger Visit Scouts 6:30 pm Council Christmas Celebration 7 pm	17 NS 3's Christmas Celebration Dinner 5-6:30 pm	18 NS Pre-K Christmas Show Epistle Articles Due	19 NS Pre-K Christmas Celebration Staff Mtg 9 am	20 NS 4's Christmas Celebration AA - 8 pm	21 AA - 8 pm
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent	23 NS & Head Start No School	24 No Dinner Christmas Eve Music 4:45 pm Service 5:00 pm	25 Office Closed Merry Christmas! 	26 Office Closed	27 AA - 8 pm Crew 150 Lock - In 6:30 pm - 10:00 am	28 AA - 8 pm
29	30 NS & Head Start No School	31 No Dinner New Years Eve Office 1/2 Day 	1 Office Closed	2 Office Closed		

St. Paul United Church of Christ
6997 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45231



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL



Church Staff:
Rev. Barry Bordenkircher, Sr. Minister
Joan Allen, Lay Minister
Rick Tallarigo, Organist/Interim Music
Director
Anne Zimmer, Office Administrator
Jim Maybury, Sexton
Anne Zimmer, Treasurer

Office Hours 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Monday - Wednesday
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Thursday - Friday

St. Paul United Church of Christ
6997 Hamilton Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45231
Phone: (513) 931-2205
Fax: (513) 931-2206
Website: www.stpaulinch.com
Email: office@stpaulinch.com

Nursery School Staff: Karen A. Rieman, Director
Susan Ehrhardt, Amy Miller, Angela Oaks, Jenny Birdsong,
Samantha Weisman, and Megan Jungkunz.

Parish Nurses: Vicki Celenza, R.N.,
Coordinator
Roxanne Reed, R.N.