



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL

January 2018

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Ponderings From The Pastor

“EXPONENTIAL HOPE” [PART ONE]

HAPPY 2018!! Did you make a “resolution” to start this new year? I did...but more on that later! Stick with me—this is a long column, but it’s what God is all over me (dagnab it!) to put out here.

An old friend of mine posted online the other day that her new year’s resolution was to read 52 books in 2018 (of any type/subject)—an average of one new book per week! This woman helps pastor a local church and works as a professor at a seminary; she therefore has a lot of “work” reading to get done every week. So, her taking on that weekly reading challenge quite impressed me!

I don’t average a book a week—might try it sometime! But, I am almost always reading several books at once. My bedside table always has three or four (or more) books on it. Right now, as the new year begins, I am hooked into two new books. One, a Christmas gift from my step-daughter, has the ominous title Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening by Diana Butler Bass. The second one is an e-book which I recently purchased online: Dream Chasers: Immigration and the American Backlash by John Tirman. Both are nonfiction books. Butler Bass is an historian and prolific author, focusing on the history of Christianity, and she is a leading voice in progressive Christianity, American religion and culture. I try to pay attention to most of what she writes. Tirman is a new author for me; he is Executive Director & Principal Research Scientist of the Center for International Studies at MIT, and has written 14 books (Dream Chasers is the most recent).

Also on my “current read” list is a book I borrowed electronically via *Hoopla* from the Cincinnati Public Library (need to re-borrow it because I didn’t get it finished!): The End of White Christian America, by Robert P. Jones (CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute). Also ominous sounding!

In addition to sounding ominous, the titles of these books are rather startling—especially for us church folk! The end of the Church?...and of White Christian America? Wow. Really?? Heavy, scary stuff!

Indeed. All three of these books speak directly to the times we find ourselves in. They deal head on with common perceptions vs. reality, fear, and hope. They deal with the unavoidable fact that our world and our culture have gone (and are still going) through enormous, unsettling, history-making, ground-breaking, tradition-shattering, institution-ending CHANGE.

All three of these books address the END of white Protestant-dominated culture in the U.S.

The end of WASP America...the end of WASP’s (and WAC’s—white American Catholics, my own term) long reign of both formally and informally “running the show”...since before America was an independent nation. For almost 400 years, since the *Mayflower* made landfall at Plymouth Rock, WASP’s—especially WASP males—have been establishing the moral bedrock and holding/managing the moral compass for our country...along with running almost all of its institutions: business/industry, religion, education medicine, the press...you name it. WASP males, like me, have been “large and in charge.”

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

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Worship Opportunities

Sundays:

9:50 AM Traditional
Worship in Sanctuary
Sunday School

Ponderings From The Pastor (continued)

But indisputably, undeniably, and inevitably, that is all changing.

Butler Bass calls this “exponential” change...change that is rapid, that is increasing, and is increasingly rapid! She writes in her blog (about the time Christianity After Religion came out):

“Something startling is happening in American religion: we are witnessing the end of church or, at the very least, the end of conventional church. The United States is fast-becoming a society where Christianity is being reorganized after religion” [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/diana-butler-bass/the-end-of-church_b_1284954.html].

And Jones says that, especially since the 1990’s, America is no longer demographically or culturally a majority white, Christian nation. Census data and demographic research seem to bear this out:

America is getting more diverse every year. By mid-century, it looks as if the United States may become a majority-minority nation, a place where whites make up less than half the population — while African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and other minority groups together account for slightly more. [Evan Horowitz, February 26, 2016 at bostonglobe.com].

And Tirman (who is not at all religious)? His book is summarized thus by its publisher (emphasis mine):

Illegal immigration continues to roil American politics. The right-wing media stir up panic over “anchor babies,” job stealing, welfare dependence, bilingualism, al-Qaeda terrorists disguised as Latinos, even a conspiracy by Latinos to “retake” the Southwest. State and local governments have passed more than 300 laws that attempt to restrict undocumented immigrants’ access to hospitals, schools, food stamps, and driver’s licenses. Federal immigration authorities stage factory raids that result in arrests, deportations, and broken families -- and leave owners scrambling to fill suddenly open jobs. The DREAM Act, which would grant permanent residency to high school graduates brought here as minors, is described as “amnesty.” And yet polls show that a majority of Americans support some kind of path to citizenship for those here illegally. What is going on?...Tirman shows how the resistance to immigration in America is more cultural than political. Although cloaked in language about jobs and secure borders, the cultural resistance to immigration expresses a fear that immigrants are changing the dominant white, Protestant, “real American” culture.

Of course, any kind of change brings fear, especially fear of the unknown. But this kind of exponential change? This kind of social paradigm shift? As Tirman, and the other two authors both note, it surely brings huge amounts of fear and dread...exponential fear!

Especially to the people in charge: we WASP’s. And most of all to WASP males. Like me.

But you know what? I am not afraid; not in the slightest.

Oh, to be sure I certainly do struggle, almost constantly it seems, with the consequences of this radical, exponential change in culture. As a minister of the Church, watching the very institution crumble which is his meal ticket? That is disconcerting, to say the least! To have watched, from the inside, of both the local church and the regional/denominational level how we have DWINDLED horrifically, and lost almost ALL our influence (not to mention money and political clout) in my lifetime—this is gut-wrenching, and disorienting. So much so, that sometimes I envy my retired colleagues! It is frustrating, often wearying, to daily, weekly, monthly, annually battle the effects of “exponential change,” especially in the Church.

The Church, by the way, and in case you hadn’t noticed, is an innately conservative institution that does not much like change, of any kind!—and that, also by the way, is not necessarily to mean “politically” conservative, but by definition: *holding to traditional attitudes and values and cautious about change or innovation, typically in relation to politics or religion (Google Online dictionary).*

But given all that, I repeat: I AM NOT AFRAID...of the end of the Church, of white Christian America, of WASP dominion, or any related “end.” And here’s why...

“Exponential change creates exponential fear along with exponential hope” (Butler Bass, p. 6).

The old-school way of saying that is “you can’t make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.”

Ponderings From The Pastor (continued)

You see, change is necessary...even vital. We literally can't leave home without it. Without change there is no LIFE. Without adaptation there is only staleness, *rigor mortis*, death. Without new air exchanged for old in your lungs, you would not be here. Without taking in nutritious food and eliminating wastes—which once were good food and, that after use, the remnants become detrimental to the whole of your body (even poisonous)...again, you'd die. So it is with culture, with institutions...even with (especially with?) the Church. So, I am not afraid of change. I even embrace, as your pastor, the role of change agent.

And I am not afraid of the future because I trust that God works for good in all things for those who love God (Rom. 8.28)—and who radically trust God. And, I believe perfect love—God's love—casts out all fear (1 John 4.18). Further, I trust in/ believe Jesus when he says "whoever seeks to save their lives will lose them, but whoever who give up their lives for me and for the gospel will save them" (Mark 8.35).

A few weeks ago I mentioned in a sermon that we are in a time of great reformation—great change—and that this has happened regularly, repeatedly every 500 years throughout recorded human history (see Phyllis Tickle's ground-breaking work The Great Emergence—which is on my "to read ASAP" list!). Halfway through and then again at the turn of every millennium, there is a "massive transition;" this transition—I like to call it a paradigm shift—is always many decades, even a century or two, or three, in the making. We are in such a time right now—and these times always bring a certain social chaos.

YET—remember, there is no life, only death, without change. No new wine contained in old wine skins.

Member and Friends of St. Paul UCC... PERHAPS WE NEED TO LOOK AT CHANGE a bit differently. All of it, at every level. Butler Bass says (again my emphasis):

*This awakening has been under way for some time and has reached a crucial stage, as a new "Age of the Spirit" has dawned. Theologian Harvey Cox points out that this turn toward spirituality" as the new form of faith started in the previous century. The 1970s were a significant period in a long process of moving away from old-style religion toward new patterns of faith. In the last decade, this shift has accelerated exponentially, sweeping millions more into both discontent and the longing for change....**Exponential change creates exponential fear along with exponential hope.** Massive transformation creates the double-edged cultural sword of decline and renewal. Exponential change ends those things that people once assumed and trusted to be true. At the same time, upheaval opens new pathways to the future. Change is about endings and beginnings and the necessary interrelationship between the two. Most people accept that technology, politics, and social conditions change. But many also think that religion will shield them from the consequences of change in these secular arenas. Others think that a return to the "faith of our fathers" will slow or stop worrisome or unwanted social change. Neither of these perspectives is true. Faith can neither insulate from nor prevent change. Instead, faith is swept up in the waves of global change, as every aspect of human experience is undergoing profound rearrangement. In some arenas of contemporary life, especially in Africa and South America, religion is actually leading other sorts of change. Religion rarely protects people from change. Perhaps a call to return to older forms of faith may delay change—only, however, in the way that Roman persecutions slowed the spread of Christianity or late medieval inquisitions turned back the advance of Protestantism. History teaches that the "faith of our fathers" may have won some battles, but has lost many a war.....Will there still be Christianity after the end of institutional religion? Yes, there will be. But it is going to be different than what Americans have known, a faith responsive to the longings of those who are expecting more spiritual depth and greater ethical integrity rather than more conventional church. Indeed, I suspect that the end of church is only the beginning of a new Great Awakening.*

Bottom line time: as servant disciples of Jesus, we need not, MUST NOT be afraid of what the future will bring. This "great emergence," or "age of the Spirit," whatever you want to call it, must be seen as an OPPORTUNITY for St. Paul UCC. Should we grasp this opportunity and shift our view of change, I believe great things are ahead for us. Should we miss—or ignore—this opportunity, well, to use that "body" analogy again, the air will go out of our lungs, and we'll be full of, uh, crap. And, Lord knows, there's already way to much of that in our culture and social discourse today.

Last, for my new year's resolution: I resolve from now on to ceaselessly preach exponential hope. I will not let myself—nor our church, its leaders, its members, or any part of it—become sidelined, disillusioned or hamstrung by fear. I will tirelessly seek to banish fear from our common life! I will engage in better physical and spiritual discipline for myself, in order to be strong with the Spirit and up for this task...and I will not stop urging, cajoling, inducing the same for your lives.

Ponderings From The Pastor (continued)

When those disheartening, disorienting times happen, I will pray more, and tell you about it—TRUSTING that you, learning to embrace change, trust deeply in God, and let go of fear, will partner with me for a “great emergence” here at SPUC.

And Vision Team...get ready. Your time has COME. ☐

In Christ’s Love, for a Prosperous, Emergent New Year,
Pastor Barry

News and Updates

FEBRUARY EPISTLE DEADLINE

The Epistle deadline for the February edition is Wednesday, January 17, 2018. 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.

Thank you



The next Council meeting is Monday, January 15, 2018 7:00 PM.

From The Nurture Team

We would like to continue to do the Good Samaritan’s Shoe Box Project again this year, but we can’t do it without some additional help. If you are interested in helping to make this project a success again next year, please contact Linda Woods for more information. We do know that Samaritan’s Purse has changed their list of requested items and will be updating that list a little more in the very near future. More details will be coming as soon as we have a more accurate list.

In Loving Memory

GIFTS TO THE CHURCH

IN MEMORY OF Grace Lienhart

Diane & Bruce Banker Lynn & Paul Kluesener
Will Maier

IN MEMORY OF Marion Zeinner

Greg Zeinner

IN MEMORY OF Alfred Molter

Dolores & Carol Molter

IN MEMORY OF Harry Bowman

Ellie Davis

IN MEMORY OF Lois Maus

Cheryl Bartholomew

IN MEMORY OF Eberhard Timmer

Anne Timme

IN MEMORY OF Dottie Mayer

Erma Amrein Diane & Bruce Banker
Alice Blum Nora Eberlein
Dot Kahle Virginia Kissel
Lynn & Paul Kluesener Linda Woods

IN MEMORY OF Herman Schlegel

Nola & Jan Apro Diane & Bruce Banker
Dot Kahle Lynn & Paul Kluesener
Lois & Dick Manifold Bonnie & Steve Rogers
Linda Woods

IN MEMORY OF Carl Heitman

Erma Amrein
Diane & Bruce Banker
Janet & Cliff Blum
Trudy & Joe Jester
Lynn & Paul Kluesener
Bonnie & Steve Rogers

Nola & Jan Apro
Alice Blum
Carol & Mike Chalfin
Dot Kahle
Lois & Dick Manifold
Linda Woods

FACEBOOK PAGE

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

Mission Partner News

MT. HEALTHY PANTRY NEEDS

Deoderant, Bar Soap
Tooth Paste, Shampoo
Toilet Paper, Tooth Brushes

Canned Fruit, Cereal

You can bring items to the main office and we will be sure to get it delivered.



Support the Mt. Healthy Alliance Food Pantry 3rd week of each month

Monday - Saturday 6 am - 3 pm
Thursday - 6 am - 8 pm

At **SWEETHEART CAFÉ**

We'll earn 10% of sales when you present this flyer at

9894 Colerain Ave. (in Hobby Lobby Plaza)

Flyer must accompany check donation



Please do not share this flyer with other guests at the restaurant.

I want to thank the following for their help with the Children's Christmas Play.

Brayden Bierkan, Brody Overholts, Alexis Mittler, Romone Johnson, Shianna Johnson, Lillian Bierkan, Jazzman Johnson, Makhia Spyers, Isaiah Johnson, Isaiah Spyers, Tyler, Mittler, Riley Overholts, Travis Johnson, Ethan Overholts, Brayden Spyers, and Kaleb Lewis.

Also, Trudy Jester, for her beautiful voice, and the greatest crew ever: Diane Banker, Mike Bartholomew, Chrissy Fields, Kim Ferry, Dolly Johnson and Jesica and Jeremy Overholts.

Thank you for not saying "NO" . From, Pastor Joan

*We want to thank St. Paul Family and Friends for the wonderful greeting and gifts during this Christmas Season. We would also like to thank our church family for all their prayers throughout 2017, a very challenging year that was made easier by the love and support of you.
Joan and John Allen.*

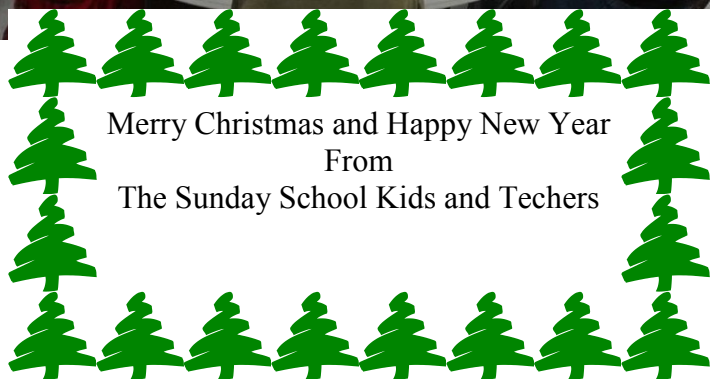
Sunday School 2017 Christmas Party



December 24th was the Christmas Party for the Sunday School. Crafts, cupcake decorating, and games.



Best part of cupcake decorating was eating the success and failures, yum!!!

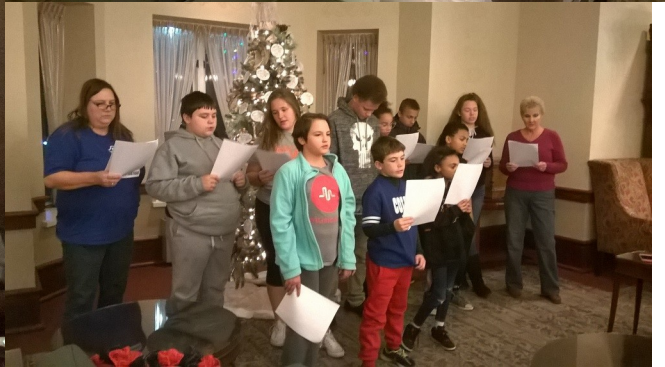
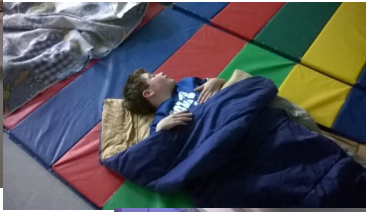


Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
From
The Sunday School Kids and Techers





**SPY
Lock In
And Caroling**

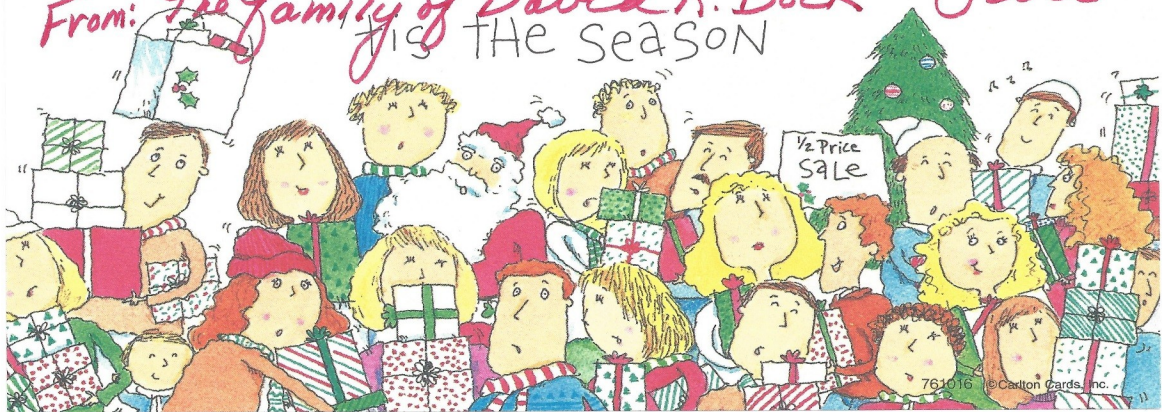


Thank You

Dear Pastor Borden Kircher
and the Memorial Service Staff,

Thank you for the love
and empathy that you showed
our family during a most
difficult time. The
Memorial Service was
lovely and meant so much to us.

May you & all those you
love enjoy a blessed Christmas
season & the happiest New Year!
From: The Family of David R. Bock
Tis THE SEASON



Thank You

"To My St Paul vcc Church Family"
I thank you for the Christmas card along
with all the other cards I receive thru out
the year. & mostly for thinking of me.
I miss Church & all of you so much.
Every thing is going real good for me. I
stay busy & enjoy each beautiful day
I look forward to receiving the Epistle &
hope 2018 will be a good year for the
Church to move forward.

Gods Blessings be with you all.

Love to you all

Betty Kling

In a star-filled sky on a holy night,
His light was the brightest of them all.

May the light of His love
always shine on you.



KRIMMER'S ITALIANETTE PIZZA

DINE & DONATE

Please join Krimmer's Italianette Pizza in supporting

ST. PAUL NURSERY SCHOOL

At a Dine & Donate Fundraiser on

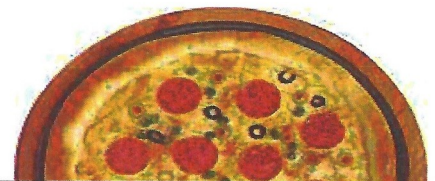
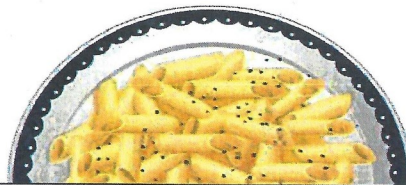
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Bring this flyer to Krimmer's Italianette Pizza and support St. Paul Nursery School. 10% of your purchase will be donated to St. Paul Nursery School when you present this flyer with your order.

(Excludes all beverages & alcohol)

Krimmer's Italianette serves pizzas, pastas, sandwiches, salads & more - perfect for the whole family!

Krimmer's will donate 10% of Dine-In & Take-out, all day.



1704 W. Galbraith Road

North College Hill, Ohio

521-7650

SCOUTING NEWS

The Cubbies are preparing to make their Pinewood Derby cars this month to get ready for the big race. They will also continue to work on their requirements for their rank advancements.



The Troop is busy working on advancements. Several of the Scouts will begin working on their plans for their Eagle Projects. The leaders are really excited as they begin working on this particular goal. They are beginning to work on scheduling additional events for this year and will have lots of input from the boys on what they want to do and to achieve this upcoming year.

The Crew postponed their Lock-In due to the snowy weather. They hope to reschedule for sometime in January. They will be continuing to work on their plans for their Ohio Trip for next summer. They are looking to base their trip on science activities to help earn their Super Nova Award.

Nursery School

Happy New Year! Hope 2018 brings lots of blessings your way!

Well, it is that time again to register for Preschool for the fall of 2018. If you know anyone who has a preschooler, please pass on the information that we are registering for the fall.

Open House for the Preschool is Thursday, January 25th from 6:00—7:30 PM. Registration fee is \$125.

A Pre-K information night is Tuesday, January 23rd at 7:00 PM.

Help us earn some extra money for our School, by having lunch or dinner at Krimmer's Italianette on January 31, 2018.

There is a flyer on the previous page. Please print and/or cut out and take with you. The flyer must accompany the check. Thank you so much!

Karen Rieman
and Staff



1/3 Sharon Wagner
 1/7 James Mueller
 1/10 William Page
 1/11 Nola Apro
 1/12 Deena Robinson

1/15 Mary Heinkeke
 1/17 Joseph Allen
 1/18 Roy Push
 1/25 Rick Davis

1/26 Helen Mason
 Charles Rogge
 1/29 Amber King
 1/30 Paul Kluesener
 Riley Overholts
 1/31 Katherine Reed



2/2 Faye Blum
 Eileen Church
 Carol Schroer
 2/4 Geraldine Cooper
 2/6 Vicki Celenza
 Lois Manifold
 2/8 Michele Harwell
 2/9 Mandi Cornish
 2/11 Elizabeth Fields
 Robert Nungester

2/12 Erma Amrein
 2/13 Sydney Schille
 2/14 Bonnie Rogers
 Patricia Sutton
 2/15 Kim Ferry
 Wm. Patrick Lewis
 2/19 Barry Cooper
 2/20 Sandy Schneeman

2/23 Barry Bordenkircher
 2/25 Dotty Sunnenberg
 2/28 Luke Jensen
 2/29 Christina Spyers
 2/29 Aaron Spyers

Please Continue to Remember in Prayer:

Nan Grow
 Our servicemen and women
 Peggy Adams
 Payson Davis
 Chad Willcocks
 Melody Hoff
 Katie Morgan
 Kathy Aker
 Ginny DuPriest
 Debbie DuPriest
 Nancy Fifer
 Will Maier
 David Smith
 Erma Amrein
 Lollie Kasaulones
 Brittany Jones
 Mike Mathauer
 John Allen
 Jack Frost
 Karon Jackson
 Randy Schwartz



Gay Steinhauer
 Mike Cornish
 Norma Carrier
 Alice Graber
 Evelyn Osterbrock & Family
 Makayla Borg
 Doug Mossman
 Don Beresford
 Margie Harman
 Tony Mancini
 Vicki Celenza
 Helen Mason
 Richard Wittaker
 Max Kramer
 Marlene Sheward
 Tom Kondo
 Stephanie Collins
 Nancy Klusmeier
 Rick Davis
 AJ Voskuhl
 Michael Schurig

Jessica Obert
 Paul LaMott
 Gay D. Smith
 Tyler Hardin
 Rick Manifold
 Mary Ann Herth
 Rev. Virginia Duffy
 Trudy Jester
 Ruth Meissner
 Kluesener Niece
 Barbara Williamson
 The Mayer Family
 Jester/Schlegel Family
 Skip Zimmer
 The Sharp Family
 Melissa Holmes
 Eugene Hereth
 The Heitman/Celenza Family
 Mike Chalfin

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:

Geraldine Cooper
 Marian Faller
 Albert Mueller
 Dot Sunnenberg
 Sharon Wagner


Bob Dickman
 Mary Lou Heiden
 Jean Schmadel
 Anne Timme
 Lucille Walters

Gladys Elsasser
 Charlotte McCauley
 Joyce Seesing
 Dolores Ungerbuehler

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



January 2018

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|-----------|
| | 1 New Year's Day Office Closed NS—No School  | 2 Office Closed | 3 NS Resumes Meditation Group 7:00 PM | 4 Disciple Study Group 7:00 PM | 5 | 6 |
| 7 Communion Take Down Decorations | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 Disciple Study Group 7:00 PM | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 NS—No School Nurture Mtg 5:30 PM Council Mtg. 7:00 PM | 16 | 17 Staff Mtg. 8:00 AM Meditation Group 7:00 PM Epistle Articles Due | 18 Disciple Study Group 7:00 PM | 19 Ns 4's Parent/Teacher Conferences | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 NS Pre K Info Night 6:30 PM | 24 | 25 NS Open House 6:00 PM Disciple Study Group 7:00 PM | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Pack 150 Pinewood Derby 12:30 PM Set-Up FH | 29 | 30 | 31 | Standing Dates: Mondays: Crafty Critters - 10 AM Scouts:6:30 - 9:00 PM Tuesday: Community Dinner 5:00 PM weekly Fridays/Saturdays: AA Meeting 8 PM FH = Fellowship Hall NS = Nursery School | | |

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



THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL

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Email: office@stpaulnch.com

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

Nursery School Staff: Karen A. Riemann, Director
 Susan Ehrhardt, Amy Miller, Angela Oaks, and Morgan Peters

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

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

