



St. Paul United Church of Christ
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Worship Service &
Sunday School — Sunday, 10 am
Office Hours: M-Th, 9am-1pm
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The Good News

July 2024



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Ray & Sandy Stillwell
July 31

St. Paul held its monthly Consistory meeting on June 11. Unfortunately, the differences between St. Paul and Pastor Kord could not be worked out and it was decided it would be best if both parties moved on. We will be moving forward very soon with a new Search Committee after we meet with Rev. Lawrence Richardson, the Michigan UCC Associate Conference Minister of Church Vitality and Transition. He would like to meet the Consistory and church. Things have been moving along pretty good at St. Paul. The Lobby improvements are almost complete. The order for furniture has been submitted. The painting and flooring are done. Carpets in the Sanctuary and Fireside Room have been cleaned. The windows and curtains in the lobby have been cleaned, as well. The outside looks fantastic. All of the green Plexiglas has been removed and windows were painted, plus new mulch and flowers planted. We have a new butterfly garden on the south side of the Educational Building that looks beautiful. Thank you to the Carr and Hoover family for all the work they did on the garden, the Gebert's for helping with the mulch and everyone that planted flowers. The outside of the church never looked this good. With that being said, there is always work needed on the church. We will have a roofing company come out to fix the flat roof in the back of the church. Also, the chimney in the back has substantial damage that will need major work done to it. This will mean removing the chimney from the top down to the point of solid brick. Constant moisture over the years has eroded the mortar between the bricks. Rummage sale items are being brought out in preparation of the next sale. We held our first free lunch program. What a really nice idea. Hopefully, we will have another one and the word gets out to the community, so we have more people come to enjoy a nice little lunch. Please remember, if there is anything that needs attention (building, service, etc.), please let a member of Consistory know, so we can address it at our meeting or sooner.



Please do not sit in any of the first 3 pews on the side of the camera. At times, it can be difficult to see the liturgist and/or the minister in the video.

Remember to return the chairlift to the top of the stairs and lock it into position, so that it can always be charged.



Happy July! The Rummage Sale sorting is coming together wonderfully! It's only 2 1/2 months away!

I didn't get my Spring cleaning done, so now it will be my time to start my Summer cleaning. Did you start your Summer cleaning? We would love your slightly used items for the Rummage Sale. Ask your family and friends if they would like to donate to our sale (we cannot accept furniture, computer equipment, broken items, text books, old magazines, or ripped/torn clothing).

When you are bringing items in, you can place them now in one area...in the Rummage Room under the church. The room has been emptied out just waiting to be filled up again. It is the 1st room on the right, under the church. There is a sign posted on which room it is.

We have a wonderful team that has been working hard sorting the rummage. Do you have a few hours to spare? Why don't you come join us? We try to work Monday-Thursday starting at 9am, for a few hours. Evening and Saturday hours will be announced. You don't need to come every day or all day.

As we announced several months ago, we had various kitchen items for sale. These pre-Rummage sales and postings to Facebook Marketplace and members' Facebook pages created a lot of activity and sales. As of date, we have sold \$1,020 worth of goods.

Come out to join the fellowship and fun that is being done. Thank you!

A cop pulls over a lady driver for speeding. She rolls her window down and he sees an open bottle in her cup holder. So, he says "what's in the bottle?" She says "It's just spring water." He says, "let me see it." She gives it to him and he says "this is wine lady!" She says, "oh my God, Jesus has done it again!"



HAPPY PRIDE!

Remember: You are made in the image of God, and you are perfect just the way you are!



June was Pride Month. So how does that relate to us as Christians? First, it's a valid question to ask why Pride Month exists at all. After all, we don't have a month dedicated to the heterosexual community. It is probably presumptuous of me to speak to this question, since I am not a member of the LGBTQA+ community, but I can only give you my take, based on my approach to history and scripture. For too many years, members of the LGBTQA+ community were told (implicitly or explicitly) by the society at large and many religious institutions that they should be ashamed of themselves for who they were, that what they were was in itself shameful and damned. Some still tell

them that. Pride Month is a declaration that this is wrong-headed. It is a way for the LGBTQA+ community to say we are not ashamed of who and what we are. Look at us and be amazed by our beauty and vitality. We are a worthy part of God's Creation. We are proud of what and who we are. We do not need to hide it, nor should we. How should Christians approach Pride month? I could argue that we should participate in Pride activities, but I am talking about something even more fundamental than having a booth at a Pride festival. I do not intend to revisit the whole argument for ONA and how we know that God loves the LGBTQA+ community as much as God loves everyone else. Rather, I want to look at something more fundamental, something that relates to our basic identity as Christians.

"This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. So they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them." (Numbers 6:23-27 NKJV)

On the face of it, this would seem to have nothing to do with Pride month, but bear with me. A recent Daily Devotional from the UCC had this scripture as its text. The writer, a UCC minister, indicated that in all her years of hearing, offering and receiving this blessing, she had never noticed the explanation behind it, that in their wandering in the desert, the Israelites belonged to God, that God's name was their name, too. How could that be true? I looked it up on Google. "Yisra" means to struggle or prevail. "El" is short for "Elohim" or "God." "Israel," which was originally another name for Jacob, means "struggles with or prevails with God." Note the ambiguity. One meaning would be "struggling with God." Another would be "prevailing with God's help," which is the more generally accepted meaning. The writer of the devotional then relates this scripture to her own need to feel blessed and to bless all others, no matter who or what they are. She finds this especially meaningful during Pride month, when so many individuals have been told in the past that they are not blessed and could not be blessed because they are damned by their very nature. She feels a real need to bless those segments of the population from whom blessings have been withheld in the past.

This relates directly to us as Christians. Just as the Israelites struggled to be worthy of God's name, don't we struggle, on a daily basis, to be worthy of Christ's name? That's interesting, because the term "Christian" only appears in the New Testament three times (Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, 1 Peter 4:16). All the other times, followers of Jesus are called followers of "the Way" or "the faith." To be good Christians, to live up to Christ's name, we must love our neighbors as ourselves, *all* our neighbors, including the LGBTQA+ neighbors. Recognizing the historical wrongs done to this community and their right to be proud of who they are is part of being a good Christian. We may not actively participate in a Pride activity, but we can support the spirit of Pride, which is that all God's children are worthy of love and blessing. When we do that, we can rightly claim the name "Christian." That is the meaning of Pride month for us.

Joyful Noisy Offering
collection since July 2023
\$813



[SUE](#)

This is kind of a personal observation/confession. How many of us really read our Bible every day? Well someone at St. Paul is challenging us. They know most of us are on Facebook all the time so they have posted a weekly Bible Trivia question and that gets our attention as most of us like to play games. And since this is played against yourself, no one knows how many times you are right or wrong. There is only one way to cheat and that is to LOOK IT UP! But is it really cheating as when you look it up, you are really using the Bible and that is what the Bible is for? When we read it, we only get the best information that leads us down the right path as we travel down the road of life.



PS: As I have gotten much more mature (older), my eyes can't read my old Bible, BUT I now have a large print Bible and you will never guess where I found it - OK you guessed it, at St Paul's famous Rummage Sale! You never know where God hides his message.

Well, we're just about done with the lobby renovation. The painting and flooring are done. Switch plates and hardware are up and the ventilation grate is freshly painted (thank you, Glenn Momeyer). Most importantly, we have ordered the furniture! As of mid-June, it was placed on order, with an eight-week delivery date. We are currently filling in the accessories: bulletin board, artwork, new signage and so on. Both the sanctuary and the lobby have been thoroughly cleaned professionally, as have the blinds in the lobby. So, by mid-summer, the lobby should be completely spiffed up. Enjoy! (But carefully, please, we don't want spillage!).



Last Day of Sunday School 2024

There is *a time for everything*, and a *season for every activity under the heavens*
Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11 NIV

Our young people enjoyed the last day of Sunday school participating in outdoor activities with Miss Trudy and Ms. Joy. We celebrate all your accomplishments this year!



SACK LUNCH JUNE 2024

It was our first time packing free sack lunches to pass out to the community. Despite good effort, the unknown community did not come.

First, I want to thank the individuals who approached me with a donation...

I am also very grateful for my small and dedicated crew who worked so hard to get the job done of packing 40 lunches that contained the following: Ham or Turkey Sandwich, Capri Sun Juice, Tangerine, Fruit Cocktail, Fruit Bar, Pretzel and Condiments.

Thank you, Ellen, Beverly, Laurie, Amelia, and Joshua! Please know I appreciate you too Dick, for washing the bathroom floor and, of course, welcoming at the door. Thank you, Joy, for all your help.

15 lunches were served to St. Paul people and 25 were donated to the Salvation Army who were happy to receive them on a hot day.

7 out of the 15 St. Paul lunches all went to James who I really want to give a big hug. He carried those 7 lunches in a box up the stairs to a hungry family of friends. That's what it's all about folks!



**In memory of Pearl Carr, Jim & Kim Hoover and Bill & Robin Carr
built this beautiful Butterfly Garden. Thank you!**

SUMMER

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 sand
 pool
 hot
 fun

