

*St. Paul's United Church of Christ is a progressive Christian congregation that makes a difference. No matter who you are or where you are on your faith journey, **we welcome you!** Join us in following Jesus's example by doing justice, promoting kindness, and sharing God's love with the whole world, starting right here in our community.*

An Open and Affirming Congregation (LGBTQIA+)
A W.I.S.E. Congregation for Mental Health
An Anti-Racist Congregation
St. Paul's is located on land that was the ancestral home of various Native Indigenous Peoples

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Greetings, Almost Easter People of St. Paul's!

Very special thanks to our entire Music Department for a fabulous and inspirational Palm Sunday presentation! Let us be grateful to all for the work that went into making that happen and for all the ways folks share their considerable talents, week in and week out!

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER ACTIVITIES:

Thursday, 7:00pm in the Sanctuary – **Holy Thursday Service** with Communion and Tenebrae.

Friday, 11:00am starting at Grace Lutheran Church – **Community Ecumenical Walk with the Cross**, with stops at Belle Grove Square Park, Locust Lane, Westminster United Methodist Church at Center and Main, and concluding with a brief service at Ascension Episcopal Church.

Easter Sunday

6:55am at Bullock's Farm – **Easter Sunrise Service** (Contact me at pastor@stpauls-ucc.org if you need directions.)

9:00am in Fellowship Hall – **Potluck Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt. Please bring a dish to share for the potluck.** For the Egg Hunt, there will be two separate areas, one for kids 3 and under and one for older kids. We have baskets they may use, but if they would like to bring their own, that will be great.

10:00am in the Sanctuary – **Easter Gathering with Communion**

NOTE that the **Sunday Gathering Zoom information** is now included in the Updated Highlights of Upcoming Church Events -- below.

FEATURED ANNOUNCEMENTS

If anyone is still in need of their **giving statement for last year**, please contact Claudia or Brian at treasurer@stpauls-ucc.org or Kelly at kelly@stpauls-ucc.org.

REVIVING BUNNIES – For many years, St. Paul's collected stuffed bunnies and other stuffed creatures (all are welcome!) to donate to Carroll Hospital for use primarily with kids and older adults. Jane has suggested doing that again. So if you would like to contribute a stuffed creature (or more), bring it in and simply place it somewhere in the Sanctuary – e.g., on window sills, on the altar railing, wherever. Once the Sanctuary fills with donations, we will deliver them to an appropriate beneficiary since Covid caused the tightening of restrictions at the hospital.

CCRE ANNUAL CONFERENCE – On April 26 from 8:30am until 4:00pm, Carroll Citizens for Racial Equity will hold its annual conference at Carroll Community College. This year's program is entitled "Relearning the Past, Owning the Present, and Building an Equitable Future." St. Paul's is a proud co-sponsor of the event and will have an information table there. Registration is now open for those wishing to participate. **INSERT FLYER LINK HERE**

UPDATED HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UPCOMING CHURCH CALENDAR

(Please forgive any blatant redundancy, but I am never sure what parts of Tidbits people look at so I will include information here and elsewhere.)

Sunday Gathering, every Sunday at 10:00am in the Sanctuary and by Zoom

To access the Gathering with Zoom video images and computer audio, click this link or paste it into your browser: <https://zoom.us/j/96602277459>

To access the Gathering with phone only, dial: 1 301 715 8592, then, when prompted, enter the Meeting ID as: **966 0227 7459**, and enter # when prompted to enter a password.

Thursday, March 28 – **Holy Thursday Service with Communion and Tenebrae**, Sanctuary at 7:00pm

Friday, March 29 – **Community Walk with the Cross**, 11:00am to noon. Beginning at Grace Lutheran Church and ending at Ascension Episcopal Church with stops in Belle Grove Square Park, Locust Lane, and Westminster United Methodist Church at Center and Main.

March 31 – **Easter Sunday. Sunrise Service at 6:55am** at Bullock's Farm, **Easter Egg Hunt and Potluck Breakfast at 9:00am**, and **Gathering at 10:00am** in the Sanctuary

April 7 – Sunday Gathering. The **Caregivers Support Group** will meet in the Seekers Room after the Gathering. The group is open to anyone caring for anyone else.

April 14 – Sunday Gathering. The **WISE Leadership Team** will meet in the Seekers Room after the Gathering. All are welcome!

April 21 – Sunday Gathering. The **Caregivers Support Group** will meet in the Seekers Room after the Gathering. The group is open to anyone caring for anyone else.

April 26 – **CCRE Annual Conference** – see flyer above

Saturday, April 27 – **Catoctin Association Spring Meeting at St. Paul's**. More information will be forthcoming. All are invited to participate.

April 28 – Sunday Gathering.

May, 5, 12, 19 – **Mental Health Awareness Month** – celebrating our WISE Commitment.

REVerberations

Easter is the most meaningful event in the Christian faith. Without it, there would be no Christian faith at all.

It is also a time that evokes questions about what really happened back then. How critical is it that we believe the stories of physical resurrection? Which of the varying accounts should we believe? What is the larger meaning of the telling of those stories? What should Easter mean for us now? And what does it really mean to you in your life or for me in mine?

We have this week to contemplate all of that again, Holy Week when we will mark various important moments in the stories about Jesus' passion and what became of him and his followers after that.

This past Sunday, Seekers explored Marcus Borg's notion of the "pre-Easter Jesus" and the "post-Easter Christ." The former refers to the man named Jesus of Nazareth and the latter refers to what the Church created after his death. If you have not read Borg, I would recommend him for your reading list. You might start with Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time.

I came away from that Seekers conversation, as I often do, with a deep appreciation for the opportunity we have here to ask questions with each other, and to seek answers we don't yet have and never may. To me, that is the essence of living faith – wondering, and all the while doing the good we can do in the world.

May your Holy Week be in every way blessed as we move together toward new life, not necessarily knowing, but longing still.

Be safe and well... Give thanks... Take good care...

Marty

Liturgist Sign-Ups

Please consider signing up and becoming part of the team that makes worship happen from week to week. You can try it once or sign up multiple times. It'll be great to have you on board! THANK YOU to all who have signed up recently! Please use this link to sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040f45aca723a3fc1-stpauls6>. Contact Lisa Macurak at lamacurak@gmail.com, if you have any questions.

Updated! Seekers Adult Education

Sessions run from 9:00am until about 9:45am on Sunday mornings in the Seekers Room and by Zoom at the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/8982361912?pwd=Nno0OG5pV0FITTdzVkJtclY2Y1FFQT09>
(Meeting ID: 898 236 1912 and Passcode: 884135).

March 31 – Easter Sunday – No Seekers session

April 7 – Exploring Beliefs about After-life

April 14 – Checking In

You are welcome to commit to every Sunday or to pop in when topics interest you. For questions or comments, contact seekers@stpauls-ucc.org.

Children's Sunday School

Children are invited to attend the beginning of the 10 am worship in the Sanctuary and then leave to participate in Sunday School during worship time. Currently we are offering programming for preschool through elementary and as needed for other age groups. For more information about **Children's Sunday School** for elementary students, please contact Laura Russell at christianed@stpauls-ucc.org

FROM THE SPUCC ONLINE PRESENCE TEAM: Please make sure you are following us on Facebook and on our Instagram and YouTube pages!

Follow: <https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsUCCWestminster/>

Follow: <https://www.instagram.com/stpaulsuccwestminster/>

Subscribe: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvo0A3_eM1q5zzGuPhN9qv_g

If there's anything you'd like us to share on social media, please send it to stpaulswestminster@gmail.com

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS: If you would, please keep making your financial contributions. A collection plate will be passed during each Sunday service. You may also make your contribution through Planning Center (see Claudia or Kelly for help with that) or by mail (17 Bond Street, Westminster, Maryland 21157), or in the Parish House front door mail slot.

ST. PAUL'S CURRENT COVID POLICY

The St. Paul's COVID Task Force is monitoring current developments and has begun conversations about how best to proceed. They are attentive to rising numbers and are working to determine the most prudent and wise way forward. At this point, no changes to the current policy that does not require masking are in the immediate offing. Of course everyone is encouraged to continue taking precautions including social distancing and handwashing. And anyone who wishes to continue masking is absolutely welcome to do so.

COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Updated! A MEAL and MORE:

As the number of Meal and More guests per week increases, concerns about having enough food have arisen. There is a particular need for additional food donations for the fourth Thursday of each month. That Team prepares chili and cornbread in the winter months and barbecue/Sloppy Joe's during summer months.

Thank you to those who have so generously donated gently used take out containers...we currently have a HUGE supply of the large containers. Effective immediately, we will only be accepting SMALL containers. Please recycle your large containers at home. Many thanks!!

NOTE: After the first Sunday of March, Georgia will be stepping back from her amazing service to the Cold Weather Shelter where she has served the first Sunday meal for several years. This is in addition to serving the weekly Meal and More – which she will continue. Thank you to Georgia for all of her wonderful work! We are now working on a plan to continue serving first Sunday CWS meals. More information will be forthcoming. And if you want to be part of planning, please let me know at pastor@stpauls-ucc.org.

CARE4PEOPLE: *From Georgia: "Care4People is in need of new or gently used tents, tarps and sleeping bags. Any questions can be directed to Georgia or Diane at waterfallgd2014@gmail.com...many thanks."*

BENEVOLENCE RESOURCE: If you are looking to make charitable donations to organizations, you might find these links helpful:

Access Carroll (free medical, dental, and mental health services for uninsured and underinsured people in Westminster and Carroll County) <http://www.accesscarroll.org/how-your-donations-help/>

Care4People (described above)

CarrollBaby Diaper Initiative (described below)

Carroll Food Sunday (food/grocery support for families and individuals in need) <https://ccfoodsunday.org/donate/>

Green Valley Samaritans (Shura Wallin and Rev. Randy Mayer (UCC), rescuing people crossing the Arizona desert, providing various types of support for immigrants) <https://www.gvs-samaritans.org/donate.html>

Heifer International (providing livestock to give a “hand up” to families in need around the world) Gift catalog at <https://www.heifer.org/gift-catalog/index.html>

Human Services Programs of Carroll County (shelter and housing services, fuel and energy assistance, financial support, job training, tax prep, etc.) <https://hspinc.org/ways-to-give/>

On Our Own (drop-in center for people dealing with mental health and substance abuse issues) <http://www.onourownofcarrollcounty.org/>

Quechua Benefit (serving indigenous poor people in the Peruvian highlands) <https://secure.givelively.org/donate/quechua-benefit/st-pauls-sister-antonia-kitchen-and-community-center-support>

Shepherd’s Staff (a wide array of support for individuals and families in need, filling gaps in the service delivery system, back-to-school bags, Christmas stockings, etc.) <https://www.shepstaff.org/ways-to-give-2/>

UCC Open and Affirming Coalition (working toward the goal of all UCC churches becoming Open and Affirming for LGBTQIA+ people) <https://openandaffirming.org/about/donate/donationpage/>

UCC Mental Health Network (sponsoring the W.I.S.E. congregation program, reducing stigma, providing for mental health and substance abuse needs in churches) <https://www.mhn-ucc.org/donate/>

Westminster Rescue Mission/Addiction Healing Center (residential substance abuse services for men and women, food and household goods for families and individuals in need) <https://www.westminsterrescuemission.org/get-involved/donate/>

THE LITTLE FREE PANTRY: In collaboration with the Coalition Against Prejudice, a Little Free Pantry has been placed on the alley next to the parking lot exit. It is intended to provide constant access to food and other necessary items. The Little Free Pantry is clearly benefiting the community. Folks have taken what they need and others have given what they can.

If you have canned or non-perishable food you would like to donate, you can bring it straight to the pantry. There is also a stand for fresh produce.

CARROLLBABY DIAPER INITIATIVE: Please send in monetary donations via check or electronic transaction at www.stpauls-ucc.org. Tom uses several discount cards to significantly lower the price of needed items and use your donations to their highest potential! Please email Tom Templeton with questions at sharonandtomtempleton@gmail.com or go to www.carrollbaby.org. Thank you, Tom!

YOGA CLASSES!: From Tom: *Saturday classes are led by Syeda Khan and are "chair" yoga appropriate for all levels of student, from beginners to advanced! Fees are \$5.00 per session and students should dress accordingly and, if possible, bring their own mats. If you don't have a mat, there are some available for your use!*

Students can get details from Tom Templeton at 410-236-4851 or at sharonandtomtempleton@gmail.com and should enter from the Green Street ramp or by the entry from the parking lot and class will be from 11:00-12:00! See you there-Namaste!

REIKI SESSIONS are available in the room next to the Chapel. Contact Renee Deiacco at rdeiacco@hotmail.com if you are interested.

Sunday Gathering March 31, 2024 Easter Sunday

Prelude

Church Council Welcome

Welcome Litany: (adapted from Rev. Quinn Caldwell)

L: In the name of Jesus Christ and through his spirit, we bid you welcome to St. Paul's, an Open and Affirming, W.I.S.E. for mental health, and Anti-Racist Congregation of the United Church of Christ. St. Paul's is located on land that was the ancestral home of various Native Indigenous peoples. You are welcome here whether you are married, in a relationship, or single, **P: for we will partner with you.**

L: You are welcome here if you are a parent or the child of one, **P: for we will be family to you.**

L: You are welcome here if you know what you believe, and you are welcome if you have no idea what to believe, **P: for we will share our faith.**

L: You are welcome here if you love people whose bodies look like yours, or if you love people whose bodies are different, for here, **P: we are all the body of Christ.**

L: You are welcome here if your people are from this place, or from far away, **P: for our God is both here and everywhere.**

L: You are welcome here if you live with mental illness or substance abuse, **P: and we offer our support and our care**

L: You are welcome here if you experience racial oppression, or if you seek to dismantle it, for here. **P: we work toward justice and equity for all.**

L: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, **P: you are welcome here**

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (NCH #233)

A Moment with the Children

Prayer

Dear God, we come with gratitude for all this day brings. It is a moment of celebration and joy, a reminder of the promise of new life, a marker for the next part of our journey of faith. Let us savor Easter blessings and take them to heart, and live like we are as blessed as we truly are. Help us carry the spirit of Easter into the world around us, that others, too, might know extravagant love and abundant life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the

ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again."

⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Sermon

"I Come to the Garden Alone" (NCH #237)

PASTORAL PRAYER AND ALTERNATIVE LORD'S PRAYER (Stephen Best)

Great Love; the root and sap of our evolving fullness, nudge us forward in our creative potential so we may flourish for the common good. In each mindful moment, help us recognize that we free ourselves from the ghosts of our past in the release we grant those who have harmed us. Keep us focused on what is right. Make us thirsty for what is just. For it is love, that knows the way, shows the way, becomes the way, to the fulfilment of our eternal call. Amen

Offering Invitation

Interlude/Offertory

Doxology

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Christ all creatures here below;
Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter;
One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen***

Offering Dedication

Communion (Please see insert)

Musical Interlude/Offertory

The 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

"Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer" (NCH #18)

Referral to TIDBITS for Information and Necessary Announcements

Benediction

Peace

PRAYER REQUESTS: If you would like to have someone included and/or remove names on the prayer list, or if you are able to share an update on anyone's status, please be in touch by direct email to pastor@stpauls-ucc.org, or by phone at 410-848-5975.

Please be sure to include your name and your relationship to any person whose name you wish to add. **That information will be included in the bulletin**, in part to help people make connections, and in part to be able to track prayer requests and hopefully keep the list updated.

PRAYER LIST: The following are particularly in our prayers this week:

For the family of Jeanne Zoulias. Jeanne died this past week.

For the family of Barbara Lindsay as they make their way through their loss and grief.

For June Baker who recently broke her arm and is recovering. And for Raymond who continues to respond well to ongoing cancer treatments.

For Waltraut Staggs as she begins hospice care at Carroll Lutheran Village.

For Tricia Faddis, who was recently diagnosed with cancer, and for Charley and their family as they care for her through this process.

For Jo Morrison and her parents. Nancy and Ray Hughey, who are experiencing various health issues. For Jim Morrison who is still recovering from a knee injury. And for Jo and Wayne as they care for them all.

For Ed Gaver on the death of his sister, Nancy Forney, at Dove House on Saturday, February 3. Funeral arrangements are in process.

In celebration with Caitlyn Crawl and Thomas Hernandez on the birth of their newborn son!

For the family of Carol Carr-Meinecke who died this week. Carol and her husband Patrick had sought to become more involved with St. Paul's a few years ago but Carol became ill and was eventually diagnosed with ALS.

For Jane Dennis as she finds her way without her dearly beloved Jack.

For Laura Russell and her family as they find their way forward after the death of mother Marilyn

Bonnie Lockard continues to deal with rapidly-progressing Cortico-basal Degeneration. She would appreciate visits and cards.

For Lloyd and Kathy as they find new ways to help Lloyd maintain and regain functioning.

For Carol Poole as she deals with health issues and related challenges, and for Lynn and Joe as they provide ongoing care and support.

For Bob Jackle as he makes his way through diagnostics and potential treatments, and for MaryEllen as she cares for him.

For Rosemary Scott who remains in rehab at Autumn Lake/Longview in Manchester.

For Doug Crawl as he makes his way through rehab following hip replacement surgery. He is at North Pines Assisted Living in Manchester.

For Maddi-Ann Dash and her family as they continue recovery from Maddi's cancer and deal with possible heart issues related to her chemotherapy

For Joe Weigman who had surgery to repair damage during previous surgery to correct a problem with his neck/spine. And for Joey Weigman and the Weigman family as they deal with a multitude of medical issues.

Diana Latane's sister is dealing with a serious crisis and Diana would appreciate prayers for her sister and her family, especially her nephew at this point.

For Sarah and her family.

For Jennika and her family.

For Ginny Barney who is undergoing treatment for metastatic breast cancer

For Malik Blackwell (Vera and Ronald's grandson serving in the US Army)

EMAIL PRAYER LIST: If you would like to receive email prayer updates, please fill out this form: [CLICK THIS LINK](#) This is a helpful way for you to know of emergent requests for prayer and opportunities to help in other ways. To request prayers, send an email to prayers@stpauls-ucc.org and provide information about your specific need.

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY LISTS

[Kelly will insert Bdays and Anniver. List]