



St. Paul Ministries

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St. Paul, a United Methodist Church, and so much more...



God bless you! I'm glad to be here, and very thankful to be able to share. We have many reasons to express our gratitude during this Thanksgiving season, which has been celebrated here in the United States for many years. It's a great opportunity for us to reflect on gratitude, and to give thanks for all the people that surround and affect us in one way or another; thankful first and foremost to God for our lives, for our families, for our ability to work, for our health and the opportunity to enjoy another day of life. More than anything, we need to make gratitude a priority, giving thanks always for everything the Lord allows to come our way – good or bad. The Lord has told us to give thanks in all things. It's easy to be

thankful when things are going well, although sometimes we forget to be thankful even during the good times.

The Book of Proverbs gives us wise counsel. It says that we should ask for what we need each day, but that we should not ask for too much; because, if we have more than we need, we tend to forget about God. On the other hand, we shouldn't ask for too little – we don't want our families to go hungry or to have their needs unmet. So, during this time of Thanksgiving, during these hard times we're all going through in the United States, when so many people are losing their jobs, their businesses, we as Christians need to keep our hope alive, and we should never surrender to the adversity of the present. These things are not new, they've happened before, so let's move forward with God's help. May we keep moving forward with hope in our hearts and gratitude to God for everything.

We don't know what the future holds until the coming of the Lord, but we need to remain thankful. Thankful for the family we have here with us, for the people who allow us to come to this church; thankful also for our extended families that live far away, and we ask God to care for them as well. We ask God for the strength to keep going, to get past these economic and health problems caused by the pandemic, and above all to trust God. Let us remember that this pandemic has also taught us some good things such as the value of spending more time at home with our families. Sometimes we don't want to, we'd rather be out doing other things, but this is an opportunity to do things differently.

For example, in the past, with our different schedules, we've had to eat separately -- whenever; but now that we are all home more, we can eat together. It has taught us what it's like to live in unity and has given us more time to spend with our loved ones – our families that we are to love and cherish. All these things are good for us. We just ask that God would continue to bless us with health, employment, and above all with patience as we wait for the pandemic to end.

This temporary setback has allowed us to be better prepared for worldwide pandemics, should one happen again. I thank God for this country that has opened its doors to us and that has allowed us to overcome the terrible circumstances that we found ourselves in. We pray that God will protect the citizens of this country, and that God will protect the new President as he takes office. May we also be good citizens of this country that has opened its doors to us, and may we learn to be givers, to help others with the help that has been given to us. So, may you all have a blessed Christmas, may we all be truly thankful and hopeful, trusting that God will take care of tomorrow. May God bless and keep you, and may God protect you. **Amen.**

(Transcript of the Fernando Ortiz Thanksgiving video, translated and submitted by Rev. Susan Whigham, Hispanic Ministry Pastor at St. Paul)

Celebrating Generous Givers

The Covid 19 Pandemic has certainly not taken away the generosity and love that comes from our ministry partners!

- In early November, Rev. Chris Wright from Christ UMC delivered over 50 new warm winter coats for our St. Paul children.
- The Sunday before Thanksgiving, Crossroads Church delivered 50 large boxes each filled with a turkey and all the fixings. We shared with the families of our children, Good Shepherd Ministries, some staff members and some pantry clients.
- On Saturday, December 5, 45 of our children [ages 5 to 17] were able to shop [free of charge] for all the members in their immediate families. The well-stocked Santa Shop was made possible by generous donations from individuals as well as congregations such as Aley UMC, Eastmont UMC, and Faith Community UMC in Xenia. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Pam Eyler and Beth Johnson who set up the shop and also to Caitlin Ankeney who helped the children shop.
- Pam Eyler organized a group of Santa's Helpers from Centerville UMC, Eastmont UMC, and Normandy UMC who came to wrap all the gifts for the children to put under their Christmas trees.
- On Saturday, December 19, Normandy UMC will be bringing personalized gifts for the children in lieu of Breakfast with Santa. This is the first time in approximately 35 years that the breakfast had to be cancelled!

The St. Paul staff sincerely thanks each and every one of you for your thoughtfulness.



Academy @ St. Paul Virtual Prayer Circle

Join St. Paul's on-going, drop-in Contemplative Prayer Circle. We gather on Zoom every Wednesday at 3pm and Saturday at 10am for Centering Prayer, reflective readings and discussions. We are currently studying *The Universal Christ* by Fr. Richard Rohr. Questions or to receive the link? Email Beth Vanoli at vanolibeth@gmail.com.

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
December 24 - 7 p.m.
101 Huffman Ave. 45403
(masks and social distancing required)
or join us on Zoom*

