



St. Paul Ministries

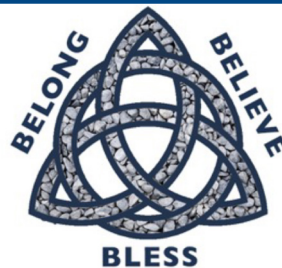
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St. Paul, a United Methodist Church, and so much more...



Christmas Message

Well. Christmas season is upon us. And so begins the annual pursuit of finding the perfect gift for each of our loved ones. When I was a young parent, I remembered that desperate scramble to buy the hottest children's gift before it was sold out. Do you remember the Atari's Pong video game or the original Nintendo? How about Cabbage Patch Kids or Beanie Babies? Silly, wasn't it? How we are a slave to our consumerist society: first, the children, by being sold on the latest craze; and second, the parents, by the fear of being rejected by our children or grandchildren because we did not brave the struggle to get them what they really wanted! Yet I must admit that a certain satisfaction swells inside of every gift-giver when they see the joy beam from the face of their loved one opening a gift they truly wanted or, better yet, least expected. And that last phrase – "a gift truly wanted and least expected" – is the very essence of what happened on that first Christmas long ago.

Now I happen to believe that from the very beginning, God the Father planned to send His Son, Christ Jesus, into our world. It was Plan A all along, not Plan B. How else were we truly to know what God was really like unless God became one of us, unless he suffered like us, unless he cried like us? How else could we really understand how deep, how compassionate, how unconditional God's love was unless we saw God healing, loving, and forgiving among us? And how would we know how to live in this world unless God personally showed us the Way? Unlike the latest craze Christmas present, which will surely find its way to the trash bin, the gift God gave us on the first Christmas will last forever and ever. And if we are truly honest, that's what all of us really want!

And the manner Christ Jesus came was also "least expected." Not as a king, not as a high priest, but as a humble baby from a poor family. Only those who valued what to look for, recognized Jesus. We should remember this when we hear those sacred, mystical words, "God so loved the world that he gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him shall not perish, but will have eternal life." Indeed, we got the perfect gift that first Christmas!

Now I want to thank you all from the bottom of my heart during this Christmas season; and from all of us at St. Paul, we wish you blessings and joy to you and your loved ones. We could not have been the hands and feet of Christ in our urban neighborhood for all these years without your selfless support in money, food and clothing donations, and in-person volunteering. No matter what your church, we consider all of you members of St. Paul. I have served as treasurer for the last 18 years, and I have seen miracle after miracle occur almost every year when things looked bleak. I am afraid I have to tell you that we are at another one of those crossroads. We made it through the pandemic with your generosity, and we thank you. But now we are faced with the rising costs of so many items we need. Just the packaging we use for our meals-to-go has gone up 400%. Our church's brickwork is in need of major tuck-pointing that is estimated to be at least \$44,000. I say this only that you please keep us in mind in this season of giving. St. Paul has been called "the little church with the big heart" by the folks in the neighborhood, and we at St. Paul want to continue to be that for as long as we can.

Have a blessed Christmas, and a prosperous New Year!

Dan Vanoli, Lay Speaker and Treasurer, St. Paul UMC



Community Candlelight Christmas Eve service

Saturday, December 24
7:00pm

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
101 HUFFMAN AVE
DAYTON, OH 45403

*Come celebrate the Christmas Story of
— Las Posadas —
Sunday, December 18, 2022 at 7 pm
St. Paul United Methodist Church
101 Huffman Avenue, Dayton, Ohio 45403*

*After the service we will adjourn to the activity hall
for a truly multicultural feast.
*Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share,
if possible**

*(Practice sessions, for those who wish to participate
in the pageant, are on Thursday, December 15 at 6:45 pm
and Saturday, December 17 at 11 am)*

A colorful illustration of a nativity scene. In the center, a manger is illuminated by a bright light, with rays of light shining upwards. To the right, three camels are silhouetted against a dark, starry night sky. The background features a gradient of purple and blue, with many small stars scattered across the sky.

Announcements

- If you need a 2022 donation receipt for tax purposes, please contact Joan in the church office 937 252-4467.
- All gift items for the Santa Shop must be delivered by Friday, December 9 before 2:00 p.m.
- Needs list: Hats and gloves; Hygiene Kits or travel size items to put in them such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, bodywash, deodorant, sox, wipes, granola bars, chapstick, mouthwash and inexpensive backpacks.
- St. Paul UMC will be closed Sunday, December 25 through Friday, December 30, 2022.

