

## Family Promise Week Coming Up



Jesus said... "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Matthew 8:20

Yes, that's right! Jesus was homeless. He relied on the generosity of friends and strangers to have a place to lay his head.

At St. Paul's we open our hearts to homeless families through the Family Promise

program. Family Promise helps homeless working families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. They operate four transitional homes to house families for a few months so they can save money for permanent housing.

Three weeks a year our volunteers provide meals for families in the program. Since there are now four houses of families, we will need a number of volunteers for each week.

Our next date is January 28-February 3. Watch for our signup link, coming soon to the website, or see Gary or Sharon Rutter to sign up.

*The Rutters*

## New Photo Directories Are Here!

We've taken delivery and you can get yours any Sunday in church! Our new photo directory will give you the information you need about our members.

Since we didn't use a directory company, there was a printing cost involved, so we are asking for a small donation (suggested \$5) if you are able to help with the printing costs.



Thanks to Denise Hosier for organizing this project and preparing the book! It's a wonderful, useful book for all our church family.

Thank you all again!

*Denise Hosier*



St Paul's will be hosting the Red Cross Blood Drive on:

- Thursday, Feb. 29th, 1-6pm
- Tuesday, April 30th, 1-6pm

Our nation's blood supply is fragile - there is a significant need for blood donors! All blood types are in high demand. Please consider donating at this or any local drive.

Please contact the Red Cross at 800-RED-CROSS or at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) to schedule your appointment today!

# Prayer REQUESTS

## ALL Prayers:

For our country  
 For peace  
 For the Ukrainian, Israeli, & Gaza people  
 For all those in the world who are hungry  
 Logan S praise back in school  
 Kathie S chemo  
 Cameron always needs prayer & family  
 Ruth S on hospice  
 Pat P two surgeries praise doing well  
 Carol M in pain after surgery  
 Lil Q still ill in bed and weak  
 Those with seasonal allergies  
 Robin E broken ankle  
 Carla stomach bug  
 A mom trying to help daughter  
 Brenda's sister-in-law emerg surg  
 Diane travel mercies to Spain  
 Alex D heart surgery  
 Tom G praise no cancer recurrence  
 All who experienced bereavement this year  
 Rev. Bill D praise for good results  
 Don S cardiac procedure continue to pray  
 Prayers for all of us preparing for Christmas  
 Caren U health appt  
 Donna R breast cancer & family  
 Joyce N bad cough and cold  
 Sharon ICU coma from covid & COPD  
 Felice tough times  
 Betty M rare breast cancer  
 Evelyn anxiety & health issues  
 Lilly G and Margaret R  
 Family & friends of Greg B  
 Family & friends of Dick W  
 Don S cardiac procedure  
 Linda effects of covid  
 Travel mercies for all traveling  
 Sandy W  
 Don S cardiac procedure  
 Frank fell head trauma

Evelyn K emergency surgery  
 Don T Meniere's attack  
 Maria bladder problems  
 Family of 19-yr-old shot & killed  
 Jackie G new med & therapy for neck  
 Denise M finished chemo keep praying  
 Sandi Di asthma & bronchitis  
 Kim G praise home from hosp  
 Sandy D lost credit cards  
 Michael H still no diagnosis  
 November Prayer Requests  
 Family of Joan W died in tragic fire  
 Linda W fell moving to assisted living  
 President Carter & family  
 Janet C new rehab  
 Don T praise good test results  
 Jennie & Don T recov from covid  
 Pam health issues  
 Arlene P hosp  
 A family going through difficult times  
 Family & friends of Bill E  
 Alysha good news on tests  
 Dax fell serious cut lip  
 Jeff for his health & safety  
 Gerry, Steve, Sue, & family  
 Donna C walker still needs prayer  
 Betty M spindle cell breast cancer

**Every week:** All those in need, unspoken requests, all service men/women, our nation and leaders.

**Ongoing Prayer Concerns:** Mary B., Joyce N., Hope T., Gerry M., Chris S., Janet B., Ruth S., Kathie S., Sharon R.

**Serving in the Military:** Caitlyn Um, Erynn Plasket, Dan Solano, Chris Yard, Rachel Rachuba, Donna Rachuba, Ed Schwebel, Brandon Howell, Shaina Serrano

**Shut-Ins & Nursing Home Residents:** Lil Q., Janet B., Rosie P., Mary B., Gloria L., Ruth S., Sue T.

## January Birthdays & Anniversaries

2- Aleyna Rutter  
 4- David Bailey  
 4- Norm Branyan  
 4- Michelle Wright  
 7 - Jessica Loveland  
 7 - Trista Jones  
 10- Carly Dyal  
 10- Kurt Toppin  
 11- Lillie Marie Gogolin  
 12- Kenny Domeraski  
 13- Joyce Nuneviller  
 14- Daniel Domeraski  
 16- Laurie Schwebel  
 17- Kim Gibson  
 17- Brandon Rutter  
 17- Diane & Joe Wonsetler  
 18- Elise Narcisi  
 19- Meghan Beidle  
 20- Matt Dechen  
 25- Dottie Davenport  
 25- Patty Fish  
 25- Jackson Merckx  
 26- Nadia Domeraski  
 30- Kathleen Spellman  
 31- Logan Dugan

## February Birthdays & Anniversaries

3- Melissa Strock  
 3- Diane Weems  
 9- Nicole Daws  
 10- Joanne Keegan  
 10- Don & Carol Strock  
 11- Ginny Gibson  
 16- Vince Lee  
 16- Selene Jones  
 19- Emily Bailey  
 20- Donna Sierocinski  
 21- Rosalyn Platt  
 22- Shannon McLaughlin  
 22- Kenneth Norris III  
 23- Evelyn Dallas  
 23- Joe Hoffman  
 24- Bert Turner  
 25- PyperLin Gittinger  
 26- Jennifer Spinella  
 27- Wendy Gittinger  
 27- Lynne Hoffman



### THE LAMPLIGHTER

Bimonthly Newsletter of  
 St. Paul's United Methodist  
 Church, PO Box 125, West  
 Deptford, NJ 08086  
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 Sunday Morning Worship: 9:30 a.m.  
 Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.

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# Then I'll Start at the Beginning

**"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." Isaiah 43:18**

Our calendars have moved into the new year, erasing 2023 from our written documents. Remember to put the right year on your checks ... if you are still using checks that is. Not a single one of us can change any of the events of the past year, nor can we erase words we said or change the activities we invested our time in.

HAPPY NEW YEAR ... as for myself I am actively shredding every and any references to that year in the past, but I won't forget the events because they dramatically impacted my life then and for the future. However, it is the future that we need to walk into together as a church family, supporting each other, sharing joy, and yes, determining how we can make a difference for God and Jesus Christ in the days to come.

In his play about Joan of Arc, 'The Lark,' Jean Anouilh has Joan reflecting on life, and she says, "Then I'll start at the beginning. It's always nicer at the beginning." Joan continues reflecting on how God's angels reached out to her. Her moment of God, she said, was when, "a light came over the sun and was stronger than the sun." Perhaps my greatest moment on stage occurred while acting in 'The Lark.' You can ask me about it.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church of West Deptford, thanks to our calendar system, now has a moment of new beginning. We won't forget the past joys and missions, but on New Year's Day 2024 we have a new starting point. It's nicer at the beginning to consider everything that



we have the potential to accomplish for God and Jesus Christ in the days to come.

Compared to many small churches, we have more people joining us for worship on Sundays lately, but don't you wonder about those who aren't with us? Will 2024 be the year when God's light shines on your path of invitation? Perhaps call friends you haven't seen in church for some time, or consider your neighbor who sits alone on Sunday mornings. Do you have friends who you'd love to spend a few hours with on Sunday who just might benefit from a loving and welcoming church experience where joy is the operative word?

Our two Bible studies are filled with individuals who absolutely love being in Bible study. They enjoy being with friends while digging into God's Word. Bible study only takes an hour or so out of the week to receive the benefits studying God's Word has for our lives. Are you ready to start a new group, join a new group, or have something you really want to discover from God's Word that you want to suggest a new study group?

Every summer, we have established the tradition of traveling to Kentucky to help total strangers. No judgment, no comments that they should do it themselves, just people from St. Paul's putting in a week's work amidst the

mountain valleys. We hit the road on Sunday July 7th. Mary Ann and I plan to be on the trip even after our "health issues." Will you join us this year?

There are so many more possibilities for 2024, but we are only at the beginning, a nice place to start. In the play, Joan tries to tell the angels of God that she does not have the ability to do what they are asking her to do. She says, "I am an ignorant girl. I don't even know how to ride a horse. I must go home now." But she didn't go back home. Instead she went forward to take on the work she was challenged to do for God.

Paul wrote to the church at Philippi: "I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me. The goal I pursue is the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus!" I take these words as a challenge to wrap around those infamous New Year's resolutions, and I hope you will, too!

Together with each and every one of you, I am entering into the void of 2024 knowing your partnership will make the journey along the paths easier. We have the potential to do so much from St. Paul's little corner of the world! I am looking forward to seeing you in church, in mission, and always with joy in our hearts for all 12 months of this year!

Blessings,

*Pastor Dave*



## Outreach

### Welcome 2024!!

#### Upcoming Mission Projects & Offerings

- **January**
  - ◇ Our first Sunday offering (Jan. 7) will benefit Human Relations Sunday.
  - ◇ On the third Sunday (Jan. 21) the offering is for Blanket Sunday.

Church World Service began in 1946 when 17 denominations came together to form an agency "to do in partnership what none of us could hope to do as well alone." The mission: Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the aged, shelter the homeless. Blanket Sunday is a CWS outreach.

- **February**
  - ◇ Our first Sunday offering (Feb. 4) is for our St. Paul's Food Pantry.
  - ◇ On the third Sunday (Feb. 18) we will be supporting Family Promise.

Our food pantry and Family Promise are both important mission projects of our church and we hope you will give generously.

Many thanks to all of the St. Paul's family for your generous outpouring of support to our Mission Projects. We remain a community of love for all.

*Cheri Clement*



## Sunday School

### Used clothes help the Sunday School

Please donate your used clothes and household items to the Sunday school through January 14! Collections will be every Sunday, drop off before 12 p.m. We are working with Bargain Thrift Center in Philadelphia.

When donating the materials below please make sure they are in closed trash bags and closed boxes. Please leave your items on the back ramp.

*Elaine Luoma*

#### We DO ACCEPT the following items:

- **CLOTHING AND SHOES** - All sizes (men's, women's, children's and babies') styles, and seasons of clothing and shoes (sandals, boots, sneakers and dress shoes).
- **ACCESSORIES** - including pocketbooks, purses, totes, school bags, backpacks, wallets, belts, ties, scarves, hats gloves.
- **HOUSEHOLD LINENS** - blankets, bedspreads, comforters, quilts, bed sheets, towels, shower curtains, window curtains and draperies, tablecloths, pillows.
- **SOFT TOYS** - stuffed animals and dolls.
- **HARD TOYS** (smaller than 24"x24"x24") and **GAMES**
- **HOUSEWARES** kitchen, office, garage, decorative & holiday items 24" or smaller.

#### We DO NOT accept the following items:

- **FURNITURE OR MATTRESSES**
- **ELECTRONICS OR APPLIANCES**
- **WET, SMOKE DAMAGED OR MILDEWED ITEMS**
- **BOOKS**
- **RECORDS**

(below) **SUNDAY SCHOOL BAZAAR:** It takes a village, and we went all out to help the Sunday School.



### Worship Service of Ashes & Reflection



**Wednesday,  
February 14  
12:00 noon St. Paul's  
7 p.m. community  
service**

# VROOM ... Save the Date ... Sunday, February 18th

It's easy to remember my neighbor and friend David Scott Todd! His presence in church on Sunday with his cowboy hat and his jacket dedicated to his favorite NASCAR driver, Chase Elliott, could not be missed. David is missed ... he went home to the Lord back in May and in a very special and unique way David is missed. He volunteered with the Food Pantry. He was always ready to give a helping hand, and he was so proud of his job at Goodwill Industries!

Last February, thanks to David, St. Paul's held our FIRST ANNUAL Daytona 500 Watch Party and raised some money for the church. Those of us who attended had more fun than we expected, and we raised more money than we



thought we would. David was excited about making the 2024 Watch Party even better, but now he will be watching from above.

As the newsletter goes to print, we are finalizing the details for that Sunday afternoon. Even if you are not a fan of NASCAR (I certainly

am not) the Watch Party will be lots of fun! Plus, it's a great way to raise some money for St. Paul's ministries while inviting friends to connect with church. I am sure the food will be good and the company fantastic. You can even pick one or two drivers to cheer on as they go round and round the Daytona Speedway track!

So SAVE THE DATE ... plan on doing something new and different on Sunday February 18th with friends both from St. Paul's and from your own circle of friends. VROOM ... who will get the checkered flag?

*Pastor Dave*



**DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS:** Led by the Worship Team, members of our Ladies' Bible Study stayed afterward one Wednesday to decorate the Sanctuary for Advent. Thanks to Worship Chair Carla Branyan and team member Bev Betz for organizing the decorating.

# Do You Remember?

A little bit of Mantua Grove history that I remember: My children and all the others would go to Mantua Grove Chapel for Sunday school, although big events were always held at St. Paul's. Before we sold Mantua Grove Chapel, we would always have our annual Picnic at Lake Garrison. We had such a great time and I do believe everyone looked forward to it every year.



Jesus birthday he's our guest, Let's do what will please him best." This is what we tease him with every year.

Two of my sons would walk or run to get up to the little white chapel to ring the bell so all could come on time. Jim Verfaillie's Dad was my boys' Sunday school teacher, and they helped him plant trees which are

still there to this day. Also during Holy Week Mr. Verfaillie would put up on the chapel lawn three wooden crosses that he had made & my sons would always help him.

So many good memories. My sons are now in their 60s and 70s.

*Joyce Nuneviller*

When my youngest son Raymond was baptized by Rev. Shank, he used water from the River Jordan. When Raymond was about 4½ he had a piece to say for the Christmas pageant they were putting on. He knew it by heart, but he was so shy that when it was his turn he just stood there and

would not say a word. His teacher, trying to help him, said, "Raymond, it is Jesus' birthday."

Raymond shouted out, "Happy Birthday Jesus!" and sat down.

Needless to say, every Christmas Eve when we are together, he hears this story again and again. "It's



**WE FILLED IN THE HOLE!** Thank you to everyone that donated to our Giving Tuesday campaign! As a result of your generosity, we were able to pay for having the hole in the driveway filled in, and there's some extra for boiler repairs. Many thanks to our Trustees, led by Gary Rutter, for keeping up with needed maintenance around the church.

## SOUP SUNDAY



**Soup  
Sundays:  
Jan. 7  
Feb. 4**

**Delicious soup made just for us by Ish at the Piston Diner.**

**Watch for an order form to be posted on the website to order online. Or see/call Mary Ann Jones.**

**Thanks to Ish and to Mary Ann for this yummy fundraiser for St. Paul's.**

# WHAT'S HAPPENING



**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING** was fabulous as always, with special music provided by our members and friends.

Thanks to Dave & Patty Fish for organizing it and to PD for leading his always-hilarious Twelve Days of Christmas.



**FOOTBALL WARS:**  
In November the Eagles played Pastor Dave's team, the Buffalo Bills, occasion for a bit of friendly rivalry.

Not to rub it in or anything, PD, but most of us were happy that the Eagles managed to squeak out a win!



**WE LOVE TO EAT!** We have Men's Breakfasts twice a month at the Piston Diner, and all men are invited. The Guiding Lights, our ladies' group, went to the Piston for a Christmas party. The ladies exchanged gifts and also donated to a special mission project.

# Children's Ministry



ST. PAUL'S CHILDREN'S PAGEANT & SUNDAY SCHOOL PARTY was held on December 17th and featured a star-studded cast of children performing, singing, serving in worship and 115 people packed St. Paul's pews for the event. Always a crowd favorite and this year did not disappoint.



# Joy to the Fishes in the Deep Blue Sea, Joy to You and Me

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy in believing!” Romans 12:12

I have to admit that when I hear the name Jeremiah I often think about a certain bullfrog whose name was raised to global fame in a song of joy back in the 1970s. It was not sung by the Three Kings of Epiphany fame but by a singular Three Dog Night that actually was a popular band formed by three vocalists (Chuck Negron, Cory Wells, and Danny Hutton).

At St. Paul’s we worship with joy, incredible joy! Joy is an operative word and an ever present feeling!

We affirm the lyrics featuring Jeremiah, “Sing it now, joy to the world! All the boys and girls! Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea, joy to you and me!” There is something truly unique happening at our church that I think people are desperately seeking... people want joy in worshipping God! They want to gather with people who smile and laugh rather than with folks busy judging others unlike themselves!

Of course, we could turn to the Bible’s Jeremiah for some joy too! Jeremiah declared, “The sounds of joy and



gladness, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord, saying, “Give thanks to the LORD Almighty, for the Lord is good; His love endures forever!” That’s something we do really well at St. Paul’s! We give thanks to the Lord God and declare that God’s love is ever lasting! If someone could eavesdrop in on our Sunday services they might not recognize it as church, because too many churches have limited or eliminated joy in worship. But not St. Paul’s!

As we head into 2024, I want you and me focusing in on the joy we share! I want us to celebrate that we can “rejoice in the Lord always!” I think it is about time we started to tell our community, our neighbors, our friends, and our family members that the God of Creation, the God whose love sent us Jesus, the God who loves

each person equally, is celebrated at 74 Church Street in West Deptford every Sunday morning!

It’s time to make some joyful noise beyond our walls! To share the story of God’s love and of the amazing place of worship St. Paul’s is!! There’s no reason to hold back because this special church should not be a well guarded secret but rather everyone within a reasonable driving distance should be wanting to worship with us ... with joy!!

Kirk Franklin sings a song that lifts my spirit every time I hear it. Of course, the song’s name is simply ‘Joy!’ Give a listen to it if you get a chance or listen to your favorite joy song and think about the joy you get worshipping God at St. Paul’s. Here’s the chorus of Franklin’s song:

“Joy, Joy! God’s great joy! Joy, joy down in my soul! Sweet, beautiful soul-saving joy! Oh, joy, joy in my soul!”

Blessings,  
*Pastor Dave*



**SUPERBOWL STROMBOLI SALE**  
Pick-up Feb. 11th  
More information coming soon!

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**  
On November 5th we received new members with the children looking on. Shown are Jim Verfaillie, Jeff Hartnett, Julie Gonteski, Elaine Walsh, and Will Walsh. Not present was Jeanine Pescatore. Be sure to welcome these folks when you see them!

# St. Paul's Calendar

## January-February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>31</b> New Year's Eve <b>9:30am Worship</b>	<b>1</b> January New Year's Day <b>12:00pm New Year's Day Worship</b>	<b>2</b> 10:00am Deptford Designers	<b>3</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>4</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Epiphany 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>7</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> <b>11:00am Soup Sunday</b> Human Relations Sunday Offering 1st Sun after Epiphany	<b>8</b> 6:30pm Girl Scouts (HH)	<b>9</b> 9:00am Food Pantry setup HH	<b>10</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry 10:00am Women's Bible Study <b>6:00pm Trustees Meeting</b> 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>11</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>14</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> 2nd Sun after Epiph	<b>15</b> Martin Luther King Day <b>7:00pm Leadership Team</b>	<b>16</b> 10:00am Deptford Designers	<b>17</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 10:00am Women's Bible Study 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>18</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>21</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:30am Megan's Pretzel Sunday</b> <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> <b>11:00am Guiding Lights Brunch</b> Mission: Blanket Sunday 3rd Sun after Epiph	<b>22</b> 6:30pm Girl Scouts (HH)	<b>23</b> 9:00am Food Pantry setup HH	<b>24</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry 10:00am Women's Bible Study 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>28</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> 4th Sun after Epiph	<b>29</b> 6:30pm Girl Scouts (HH) <b>Family Promise Week</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>1</b> February 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>4</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> <b>11:00am Soup Sunday</b> Food Pantry Offering 5th Sun after Epiph	<b>5</b> 6:30pm Girl Scouts (HH)	<b>6</b> 10:00am Deptford Designers	<b>7</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>8</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>11</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> <b>11:00am Super Bowl Stromboli Sale</b> Last Sun after Epiph	<b>12</b> Lincoln's Birthday <b>6:30pm Girl Scouts (HH)</b>	<b>13</b> <b>6:30pm Woman's Club of West Deptford</b>	<b>14</b> Valentine's Day Ash Wednesday 7:00am Holy Communion 8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry <b>12:00pm &amp; 7pm Ash Wednesday Worship</b> 7:00pm NA Mtg	<b>15</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>18</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:30am Megan's Pretzel Sunday</b> <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> <b>2:00pm Daytona Watch Party</b> 1st Sun in Lent Mission offering: Family Promise	<b>19</b> Presidents' Day	<b>20</b> 10:00am Deptford Designers	<b>21</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>22</b> Washington's Birthday 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> <b>1:00pm Girl Scouts (HH)</b> 8:00pm AA meeting
<b>25</b> 9:30am Worship <b>10:45am Sunday School</b> 2nd Sun in Lent	<b>26</b> 7:00pm Guiding Lights (HH)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 7:00am Holy Communion 8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry 7:00pm NA Mtg <b>7:30pm Evening Bible Study ZOOM</b>	<b>29</b> <b>12:30pm Red Cross Blood Drive</b> 7:00pm Choir prac	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 8:00pm AA meeting