

# St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 35, Issue I

March, 2013

St. Paul's United  
Methodist Church

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Elida, OH 45807

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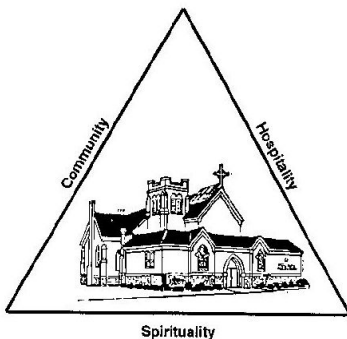
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Well this time last year we were all preparing for change that brought us together. I am not very good at celebrating and letting people know how good a job they have done and I am always afraid I will forget something or someone. For all the people who have helped by being liturgists over the last 8 months, thank you and good job. Choir, Bells, Organists, Pianists and Soloists who have led us with wonderful music thank you. Teachers who are running Sunday School with excitement and enthusiasm keep up the good work. All of you who are giving to fund our budget, pay our apportionments and pay off our debt this year keep up the good work. Office workers, book keepers and treasurers without you this would all come to a grinding halt. People maintaining the buildings and grounds your stewardship is greatly appreciated. Program leaders, kitchen help, greeters, ushers and whoever I have forgotten keep up the great work.

No rousing speech about what is happening in the future. No selling of a plan or a program. Just simple thanks for being who you are and choosing to follow God's call. Lent is a time of reflection and preparation for the resurrection of Christ. We are in the middle of lent and heading not to the cross which brought death but past the tomb that is empty and on to the feet of Jesus who continues to save. We prepared last year to meet and make good first impressions with each other how much more should we prepare to meet Christ with the best we have to offer. There will be many opportunities in the months and years to come to follow Christ into the mission field, perhaps we need to spend a little time thanking God for all we have received and praying that God would lead us in ways that will be pleasing to Christ.

Thank you again and may God's Grace uplift you,  
Pastor Paul

## Thought for the Month:

You don't stop laughing  
because you grow old.  
You grow old because you  
stop laughing.

### Women of Faith Conference

Columbus, OH at Nationwide Arena  
August 9<sup>th</sup> (5pm to 7pm) and  
August 10<sup>th</sup> (9am to 5pm).  
Cost is \$99.00 for 2 days.

See Marla Scannell for further details  
and reservations.

**Believe God Can Do Anything!**

### Did You Know?

St. Patrick's Day is a cultural and religious holiday celebrated on March 17, the anniversary of St. Patrick's death. It commemorates St. Patrick, the most commonly recognized of the patron saints of Ireland, and the arrival of Christianity in Ireland. In America, we wear green and celebrate with parades.



**March**  
**'Coins for Communion'**  
**to benefit**  
**Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen.**



## Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

### Seniors Day Out

March 19, 2013 at 12:00 Noon  
Neil Winget to speak on scam's  
aimed toward Senior Citizens.  
All seniors welcome!

### St. Paul's Book Club

March 2, 2013  
9:00 AM

Join us for a book discussion about  
Still Alice by Lisa Genova.

Please bring your own breakfast.



### St. Paul's Epistle

is published by St. Paul's  
United Methodist Church

Subscription Rate: NONE

Secretary:	Gail Fessler
Secretary:	Jone Lane
Organist:	Linda Holman
Pianist:	Lois Cook
Choir Director:	Judy Chaffins
Custodian:	Dave Decker



### St. Paul's Chicken Barbeque

April 27, 2013  
Tickets will be \$7.50

See April's newsletter  
for further details.

Newsletter  
deadline:  
the **16th**  
of each month



Remember:

Daylight Savings Time begins  
March 10, 2013.

Set your clocks ahead 1 hour.



### Top 10 Easter Candies

1. Marshmallow Peeps
  2. Cadbury Crème Eggs
  3. Jelly Beans
  4. Robin's Eggs
  5. Reese's Peanut Butter Eggs
  6. Chocolate Bunny
  7. Chocolate Marshmallow Eggs
  8. Cadbury Mini Eggs
  9. Chocolate Eggs
  10. Easter Candy Corn
- [GourmetGiftBaskets.com](http://GourmetGiftBaskets.com)

*Did your favorite  
make the list?*

## Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

**Palm Sunday**  
**March 24, 2013**  
**10:00 AM**



**Easter Sunrise  
Service**  
**March 31, 2013**  
**8:00 AM**

**Maundy Thursday**  
**March 28, 2013**  
**7:00 PM**



**Breakfast served in the  
Fellowship Hall**



**An Easter Cantata  
will be presented  
by the St. Paul's Choir  
March 31, 2013  
"Easter Trilogy—  
A Cantata in Three Suites"  
By Benjamin Harlan**



**There is always room for more  
voices if you would  
like to join the choir and raise  
your voice in praise to God.**

# The Business of Church

## Mission Correspondence Excerpts

### Heartbeat of Lima, Inc:

St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Thank you for supporting Heartbeat of Lima with your financial donations in 2012. Your generous donations are greatly appreciated.

Patti Kennedy, Executive Director

### Salvation Army:

I wanted to send you a note of thanks to express my appreciation for your generosity in support of The Salvation Army. The commitment of the community was overwhelming and allowed us to help over 1000 families this holiday season. I wish to thank you again for your continued support.

Felipe Tamayo, Major

### Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Inc.:

Dear St. Paul UMC, The year of 2012 was full of many blessings for Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, and you were one of those blessings. Grace was afforded through the meal that was available to 40,940 people over 259 days. Thank you so much.

With Glory to God on High,

Stephen Jenkins, LSW, Executive Director

### Heifer International:

A certificate of appreciation was received from Heifer International for St. Paul's UMC donations to the organization in 2012. The certificate is posted on the Mission's bulletin board in the education wing.

### Hope Visitation and Exchange Center:

Thank you very much for your recent donation to Hope V & E Center. We are so grateful and appreciative of your thoughtfulness to help our cause. We are struggling to keep providing a safe and neutral supervision for our families in the community.

God Bless You.

### Volunteers Needed:

Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen  
Friday, March 29th  
for noon meal

This is an ongoing mission  
of St. Paul's UMC

If interested contact Tim Piper



### Lima Area Methodist Men's Breakfast

Saturday, March 9, 2013

8:00 AM

Hosted by Bath Community UMC  
(formerly Bluelick UMC)  
2760 E. Bluelick Road  
(east of Stewart Road)

There will be a presentation by Jamie Wyant on  
the upcoming summer mission work at  
United Methodist Camp Wesley  
north of Bellefontaine.

A free-will offering will be collected at the  
breakfast, which is free and open to all men.

# When Is Easter?

Every year the date of Easter changes. The main reason is that unlike holidays which are tied to specific dates, Easter always falls on a Sunday. Also, because the events of Jesus' death and resurrection occurred in the context of the Jewish Passover festival (remember, Jesus and the disciples were Jewish), the date follows the Jewish pattern of being tied to the lunar calendar.

Easter Sunday is always the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21, the vernal equinox, or the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Thus, Easter can fall anywhere in between March 22 and April 25.

To add to the confusion, Eastern churches (such as Russian and Greek Orthodox) use a slightly different calendar, and their Easter is about two weeks after the date celebrated by Western churches.

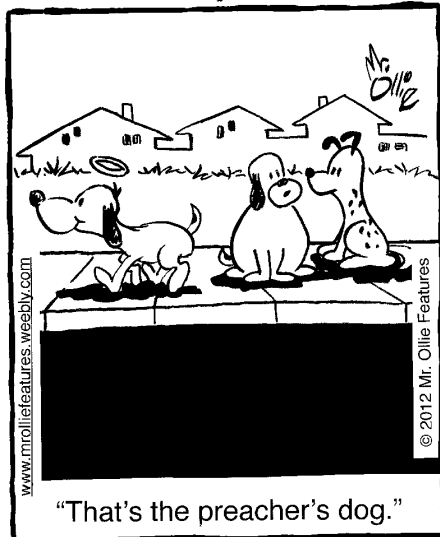
Several proposals have been raised throughout history to arrive at a fixed date, but none of them have taken off. The most recent occurred in 2001 when Eastern and Western dates coincided for the first time in centuries.

Proposals have included fixing the date on the second Sunday in April, or agreeing always to have seven Sundays in the Season after the Epiphany. Others have proposed a fixed calendar date of April 9, believed to have been the actual date of the original resurrection, but such a date would mean that Easter would seldom land on a Sunday. None of these proposals have ever been taken very seriously.

There is one major advantage to having the date change each year. As Christians we are called to follow Jesus and that often means being out of step with the rest of the world. When we follow a calendar that is just a little out of step it reminds us of the call to challenge the direction the world may be going. The floating date of Easter can help us remember and celebrate this.



## Book of Timothy



## Committee Chairs 2013

<b>PPR Chair</b>	Dwain Metzger
<b>Trustees Chair</b>	Ron Steiner
<b>Finance Chair</b>	Marty White
<b>Treasurer</b>	Margie Best
<b>Education Chair</b>	Jan Wyant
<b>Administrative Council</b>	Art Holman
<b>Worship</b>	Pastor Paul Scannell
<b>Nurture</b>	Linda Holman
<b>Missions</b>	Tim Piper

# Faith In Action

## Worship Attendance:

February 3, 2013	85
February 10, 2013	96
February 13, 2013 Ash Wednesday	45
February 17, 2013	96
February 24, 2013	102

## Financial Giving

Weekly Need for  
Unified Ministry Budget  
\$3,466.00



Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
February 3, 2013	\$5,651.00	\$1,110.01
February 10, 2013	\$3,025.77	\$429.00
February 13, 2013 Ash Wednesday		\$106.00
February 17, 2013	\$1,915.00	\$165.00
February 24, 2013	\$	\$

## Sunday School Attendance

February 3, 2013	28
February 10, 2013	32
February 17, 2013	31
February 24, 2013	33

## Flower Calendar



March 3, 2013	Chris Bowsher
March 10, 2013	Dan & Margie Best
March 17, 2013	Ruth Hardy
March 24, 2013	Fran Hall
March 31, 2013	Ron & Mary Steiner

## Greeters

March 3, 2013	Steve, Tracy & Tahler Sdao
March 10, 2013	Margie Best & Jone Lane
March 17, 2013	Ray & Phyllis Trigg
March 24, 2013	Ron & Mary Steiner
March 31, 2013	Ruth Burgoon & Susan Nartker

Visit The United  
Methodist Website at:  
[www.umw.org](http://www.umw.org)

# Daily Bible Readings for March

## Friday 3/1

Psalm 22, 141, 143:1-12  
 Jeremiah 29:1-13  
 Romans 11:13-24  
 John 11:1-27

## Saturday 3/2

Psalm 42, 43, 137:1-9, 144  
 Jeremiah 31:27-34  
 Romans 11:25-36  
 John 11:28-44

## Sunday 3/3

Psalm 63:1-11, 98, 103  
 Daniel 9:3-10  
 Hebrews 2:10-18, John 12:44-50

## Monday 3/4

Psalm 41, 44, 52  
 Genesis 37:1-11  
 1 Corinthians 1:1-19, Mark 1:1-13

## Tuesday 3/5

Psalm 45, 47, 48  
 Genesis 37:12-24  
 1 Corinthians 1:20-31  
 Mark 1:14-28

## Wednesday 3/6

Psalm 49, 53, 119:49-72  
 Genesis 37:25-36  
 1 Corinthians 2:1-13  
 Mark 1:29-45

## Thursday 3/7

Psalm 50, 59  
 Genesis 39:1-23  
 1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15  
 Mark 2:1-12

## Friday 3/8

Psalm 40, 51, 54  
 Genesis 40:1-23  
 1 Corinthians 3:16-23  
 Mark 2:13-22

## Saturday 3/9

Psalm 138, 139:1-23  
 Genesis 41:1-13  
 1 Corinthians 4:1-7  
 Mark 2:23-3:6

## Sunday 3/10

Psalm 24, 29, 84  
 Genesis 41:14-45  
 Romans 6:3-14  
 John 5:19-24

## Monday 3/11

Psalm 56, 57, 58, 64, 65  
 Genesis 41:46-57  
 1 Corinthians 4:8-21  
 Mark 3:7-19a

## Tuesday 3/12

Psalm 61, 62, 68  
 Genesis 42:1-17  
 1 Corinthians 5:1-8  
 Mark 3:19b-35

## Wednesday 3/13

Psalm 72, 119:73-96  
 Genesis 42:18-28  
 1 Corinthians 5:9-6:8  
 Mark 4:1-20

## Thursday 3/14

Psalm 70, 71, 74  
 Genesis 42:29-38  
 1 Corinthians 6:12-30  
 Mark 4:21-34

## Friday 3/15

Psalm 69:1-38, 73  
 Genesis 43:1-15  
 1 Corinthians 7:1-9  
 Mark 4:35-41

## Saturday 3/16

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76  
 Genesis 43:16-34  
 1 Corinthians 7:10-24  
 Mark 5:1-20

## Sunday 3/17

Psalm 93, 96  
 Genesis 44:1-17  
 Romans 8:1-10  
 John 5:25-29

## Monday 3/18

Psalm 77, 79, 80  
 Genesis 44:18-34  
 1 Corinthians 7:25-31  
 Mark 5:21-43

## Tuesday 3/19

Psalm 78  
 Genesis 45:1-15  
 1 Corinthians 7:32-40  
 Mark 6:1-13

## Wednesday 3/20

Psalm 81, 82, 119:97-120  
 Genesis 45:16-28  
 1 Corinthians 8:1-13  
 Mark 6:13-29

## Thursday 3/21

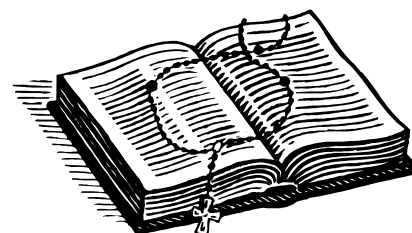
Psalm 42, 43, 85, 86  
 Genesis 46:1-34  
 1 Corinthians 9:1-15  
 Mark 6:30-46

## Friday 3/22

Psalm 88, 91, 92  
 Genesis 47:1-26  
 1 Corinthians 9:16-27  
 Mark 6:47-56

## Saturday 3/23

Psalm 87, 90, 136  
 Genesis 47:27-48:7  
 1 Corinthians 10:1-13  
 Mark 7:1-23



Holy Week Readings on pg. 8.

# Holy Week Readings



**BLESSED IS THE KING!**

Lk 19:38



## Palm Sunday March 24

Psalm 24, 29, 103  
Zechariah 9:9-12  
1 Timothy 6:12-16

## Monday March 25

Psalm 51:1-20, 69:1-23  
Jeremiah 12:1-16  
Philippians 3:1-14  
John 12:9-19

## Tuesday March 26

Psalm 6, 12, 94  
Jeremiah 15:10-21  
Philippians 3:15-21  
John 12:20-26

## Wednesday March 27

Psalm 55, 74  
Jeremiah 17:5-10, 14-17  
Philippians 4:1-13  
John 12:27-36



## Maundy Thursday March 28

Psalm 102, 142, 143  
Jeremiah 20:7-11  
1 Corinthians 10:14-17, 11:27-32  
John 17:1-11

## Good Friday March 29

Psalm 22, 40:1-19, 54  
1 Peter 1:10-20  
John 13:36-38

## Holy Saturday March 30

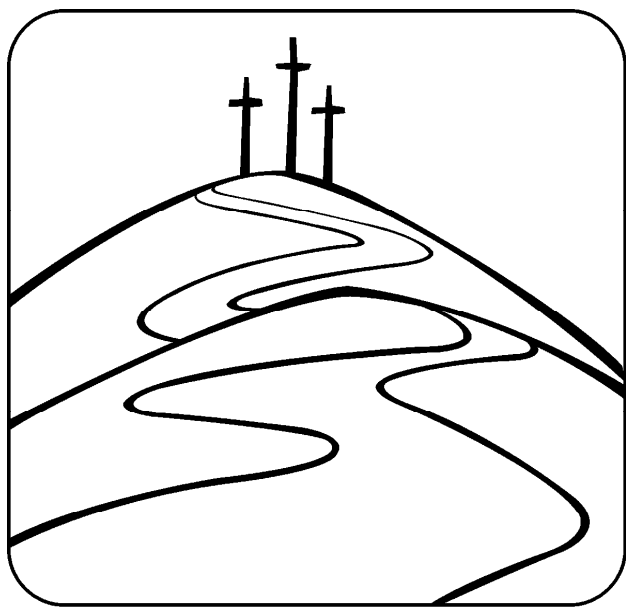
Psalm 27, 88  
Job 19:21-27  
Hebrews 4:1-16  
Romans 8:1-11

## Easter Sunday March 31

Psalm 118  
Exodus 12:1-14  
John 1:1-18



## Gathered Around the Cross



The story of Jesus' arrest, trial, and crucifixion is a rich and detail-laden story. We could spend hours discussing parts of phrases, but how much better it might be if we could just have some of the feeling we get in that old spiritual "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" Something hauntingly spiritual and powerful lives in that question. In truth, even those who were there may not have had any idea about what was really taking place. Only in retrospect, especially with the perspective of faith, do some people like the writers of the Gospels tell us that something cosmically significant and everlastingly important was taking place at the moment when Jesus was on that cross . . .

If we take the perspective of John's Gospel, we find that Jesus must look hard in order to discover any true friends in the crowds gathered around the cross. But look he does, and in the process he sees his mother, and the disciple whom he loved. John tells us that two other women were there as well, his mother's sister (whose name for the sake of confusion is also Mary), and Mary Magdalene . . . And then John tells us there are others. Soldiers are nearby, and two others are being crucified with him, but in John's telling of this story Jesus doesn't talk with them. Far into the background are Pilate and the chief priests, and off in hiding are all the rest of the disciples, including bold Peter, sulking now for having denied Jesus. Paul is off making tents somewhere,

not having any idea of what's going on in Jerusalem. There's a good chance that at least a couple of the Gospel writers are still in school and may have only heard rumors about Jesus. They would have to get their evidence about what happened on Good Friday from those few witnesses who actually did have the courage to stick around and watch the whole thing creep ever so slowly and deliberately to its end.

But what looks like defeat is, strangely, the fulfillment of a life directed toward such a moment. At least in John's Gospel the picture we have of Jesus is of someone who is about as far from a helpless victim as you can get. It isn't that he would wish his death, for indeed he had prayed with real tears that this was a cup which might be taken away. But when finally the time comes for him to drink this cup, he does so with a kind of commanding presence that has eternal consequences. His final words, so difficult to utter because it takes his last breath to get them out, are "It is finished."

What was finished, of course, was just about to start. Except for those four who stood by the cross, it will take a while before they can come to terms with what happened. It will take some time for his disciples to be regathered and spirited for the missionary work that lies before them. It will take some time before Paul gets turned around by a bolt of lightning. A number of years will pass before some followers feel compelled to write down the entire story. Many of us can identify with them at this point as we testify to the time it has taken us to get to this point in our faith walk.

On that cross-marked day so long ago only Jesus, it seems, had any inkling about the eternal ramifications of what was taking place. Now we find ourselves reflecting on what took place on the day Jesus died. From the perspective of the cross, when Jesus said "It is finished," he was saying that the bridge of reconciliation was finally and completely established. This bridge moreover was laid down in love and sacrifice and meant for everyone in the world. All who walk into this forgiveness will need to pause by his cross and see Jesus looking at them with the love he had for his mother and that disciple. Praise God that he looks at us with the same love.

- by George H. Martin, excerpted with permission from *The Clergy Journal*, © Logos Productions.



## Remember When...



1999  
Renovating the Youth Room

L-R: Sara Matlock, Brad Joseph,  
Tara Thompson, Jon Cook, Jordan  
Wyant, Jim Thomas

2001  
Kononia Sunday  
School Class



2005  
Relay for Life Dinner



## Connecting With ...

# Thank You

Thank you to **Margie Best** for  
taking over the duties of Treasurer  
for St. Paul's.

You watched me grow up, you nurtured me in the faith, and you supported me throughout life. You embraced my poems with open arms, and you accepted me as your treasurer. For everything, I thank you. My parting seems sudden, however I have determined it is time to move on. Life has constructed before me a new road. There is no promise it is paved or smooth at all, but down its path I will tread, not alone. God is with me as is the one He has placed in my life to love and to cherish. It has been a pleasure to care for the finances of the church though my tenure was brief. I am grateful for the experience. The skills I developed as your treasurer are helping me at my new job. My mind will be warmed from time to time with the thoughts of many stories that were spun here between these walls with the yarn of Christian love and fellowship during the years. I wish the best to your new treasurer and to all of you.

**Thank you,  
Jenessa**



## Remember in Prayer

### Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Becky Bean  
Karen Bible

### Homebound Members

Hazel Dunn  
Jean Redd

### Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

Dorothy Banks  
Joanna Hurd  
Rodney Lee

### In the Military & Missions

Eddie Mault  
Jason Stanley



How wonderful to have young children again learning to be acolytes!

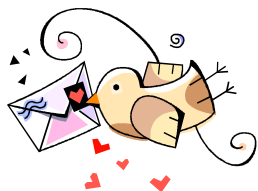
Right: Brittany and Cody Scannell light the candles on Sunday, February 10, 2013.

## The People of St. Paul's

*Dear Friends at St. Paul's,  
Thank you so much for the  
cards, prayers, and well  
wishes I received during my  
recent surgery. It meant a lot  
to me.*

*Blessings,  
Becky Bean*

Thank  
You!



**Karen Bible** is ill and has been in the hospital several times recently. She is dealing with a lot of pain and needs to know that her St. Paul's family is praying for her and cares for her. Please take time to send a card to her so she will know that we are all thinking of her and wishing her the best.

**Karen Bible**  
5055 Daisy Lane  
Elida, OH 45807

*Dear Friends of St. Paul's,  
You are indeed a wonderfully kind,  
caring and generous group of  
Christians. We are so grateful for  
each of the ten years that Allen was  
appointed to serve in Elida.  
We just plain love you guys!!  
Thank you so very much for your  
thoughts, prayers, presence, cards,  
gifts and phone calls following  
Allen's passing. It has all helped  
immensely to make this difficult  
time better. As a result of reading  
the most recent "St. Paul's  
Epistle", I've decided that I need to  
read again "Words for the Weary".  
Please know, dear friends, that  
each of you will always have a  
special place in our hearts.*

*Most Sincerely,  
The Puffenberger Family*

Our sympathy to **Dave Decker** and his family on the death of his sister, Deb Geary, who passed away on Thursday, February 14, 2013. The service was held in Columbus Grove on Tuesday, February 19th. Cards may reach Dave at 112 E. Main St., Elida, OH 45807.



Our Sympathy is extended to the **Virginia Yarger** Family. Virginia passed away Thursday, February 14, 2013. Pastor Paul conducted the funeral service which was held at St. Paul's on Monday, February 18, 2013.

**Prayer List Updates**  
**Please Contact**  
**Lavonne Segovia**

## Meetings

March 4, 2013

PPR...7:00 PM

March 5, 2013

Trustees...7:00 PM

March 6, 2013

Worship...6:00 PM

March 11, 2013

Finance...7:00 PM

March 11, 2013

Ad Council...7:30 PM

March 19, 2013

Missions...7:00 PM

**Sundays**

Prayer...8:45 AM

Sunday School...9:00

AM

Fellowship...9:30 AM

Worship...10:00 AM

Bell Choir...7:00 PM

**Wednesdays**

Chancel Choir...7:00

PM

# March 2013

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1 Scott Grapner	2 Joanna Hurd 83 years
3	4 Janna Thompson	5 Scott Fessler	6	7 Tim Theodore	8	9
10 	11	12 Linda Holman Ethan Lewis	13 Carol Lee 91 years	14 Cody Smith	15	16
17 	18	19	20 Tara Strauch	21 Amber Fox	22 Nancy Gesler	23
24 Joyce Nichols 87 years	25	26	27 Julia Bok	28 Derek Bible	29	30 Tahler Sdao
31						

## Anniversaries

Jeff & Shelly Reiff  
March 12

Tony & Shirley Shoup  
March 20

Brent & Vicki  
McAdams  
March 21

Jordan & Amy Wyant  
March 28

Spring

# Featured Recipes from St. Paul's Great Cooks

## Slow Cooker Apple Cinnamon Steel-Cut Oatmeal

*by Deb Hurd*

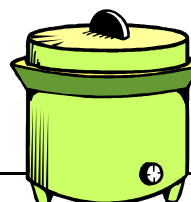
Ingredients		Instructions
2	Apples, peeled, cored, cut into 1/2 inch pieces	Coat inside of 3 1/2 quart (or larger) slow cooker with cooking spray. Add all ingredients (except optional toppings) to slow cooker. Stir, cover, and cook on low for approximately 7 hours (slow cooker times can vary).
1 1/2 cups	Fat-free milk (can substitute almond milk)	
1 1/2 cups	Water	
1 cup	Uncooked steel-cut oats (can NOT be substituted!)	Spoon oatmeal into bowls and add additional toppings if desired. Store leftovers in refrigerator. Freezes well.
2 Tbl.	Brown sugar (or substitute maple syrup)	
1 1/2 Tbl.	Butter, cut into 5-6 pieces	To reheat single servings: Put 1 cup cooked oatmeal in microwave proof bowl. Add 1/3 cup fat-free milk. Microwave on high for 1 minute; stir. Continue cooking for another minute, or until hot.
1/2 tsp.	Cinnamon	
1 Tbl.	Ground flax seed	Recipe can be doubled in 6-quart or larger slow cooker. Increase cooking time by 1 hour.
1/4 tsp.	Salt	
Optional garnishes	Chopped nuts, raisins, maple syrup, additional milk or butter	When freezing, put in 1 cup bags so you have single servings ready to go.



## Crock Pot Roast

*by Margie Best*

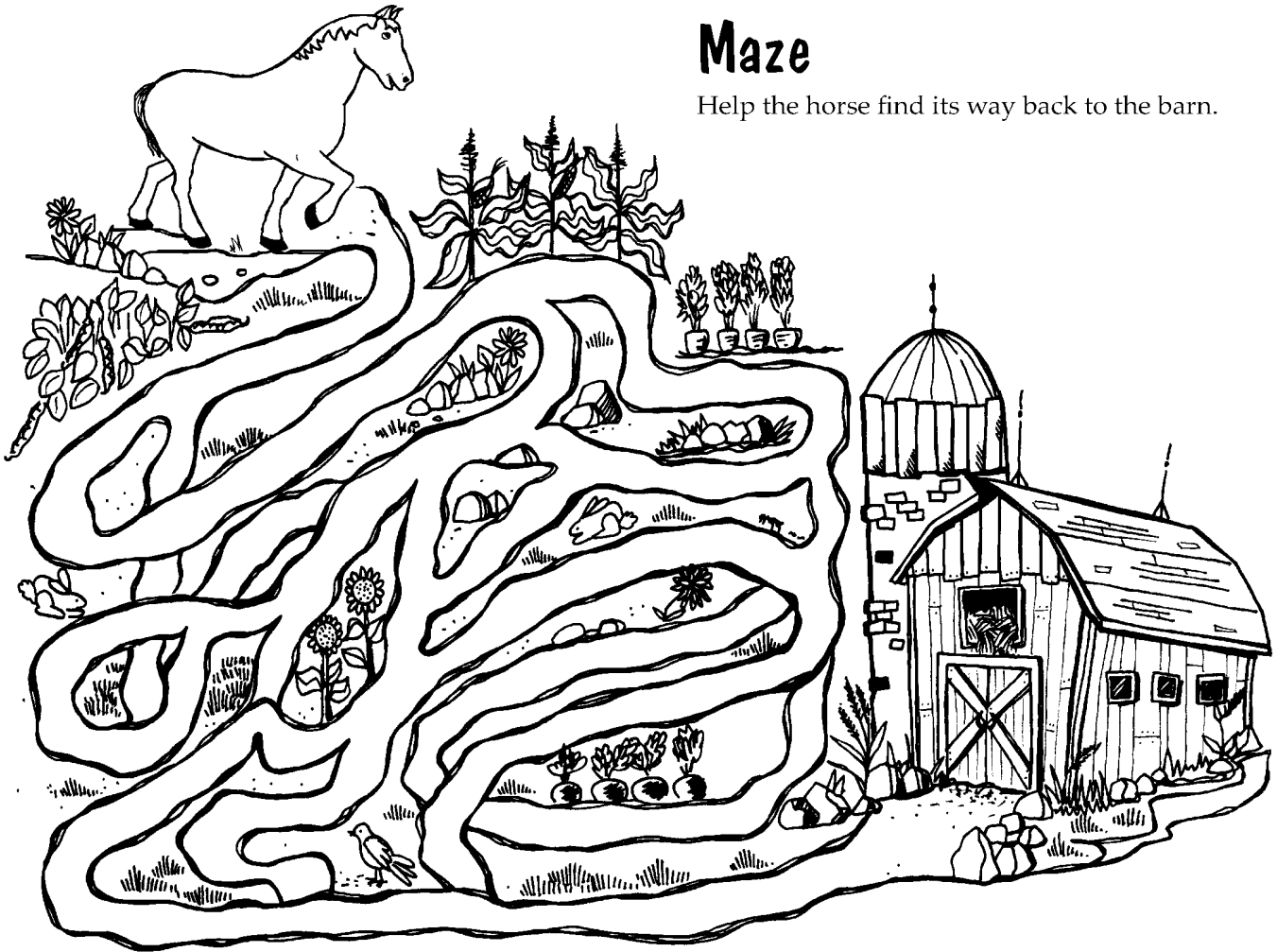
Ingredients		Instructions
1 pkg.	Ranch dressing mix	Place roast in crock pot. Mix all 3 envelopes of mixes together and sprinkle on top or roast.
1 pkg.	Brown gravy mix	
1 pkg.	Italian dressing mix	Pour 1/2 cup warm water into bottom of crock pot. Cook on low 6-7 hours.
1/2 cup	Warm water	
	Beef roast	You can also add potatoes and carrots to the crock pot.
	Potatoes—optional	
	Carrots—optional	



# KIDZ KORNER

## Maze

Help the horse find its way back to the barn.



## Decode the Message

Change the letter in each box to the one that comes before it in the alphabet. See Zechariah 1:8b for help.

c	f	i	j	o	e	i	j	n	x	f	s	f

s	f	e	t	p	s	s	f	m	b	o	e

x	i	j	u	f	i	p	s	t	f	t

Answer:  
Behind him were red,  
sorrel, and white horses.

**St. Paul's United Methodist Church**

105 E. Main St.  
Elida, OH 45807

\*Return Service Requested

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
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45807  
Permit No. 71

**Our Web Address:**  
**[www.elidastpaulschurch.org](http://www.elidastpaulschurch.org)**

# March 2013



## Living Our Faith

### **Easter the leap of faith**

Life after death. It is our deepest longing; our bravest statement of faith. Easter gives us the hope that life continues in some way after we die: that death isn't the end. That Jesus is still with us.

Other hopes are attached to this fundamental one. Like, the hope of seeing Jesus face to face; of reuniting with loved ones who have died; of being healed; of being rewarded for the hard work; of being comforted for all we have suffered.

We cling to the promises and prophecies of the New Testament. And we are fascinated by the stories of

people who have had near death experiences. We long to know the real truth.

But could it be that in our finite condition, with our limited consciousness, we are simply not capable of grasping the whole truth? Our imagination fails us because we do not have the experiential tools to construct ultimate meaning.

It is a great leap of faith, to trust in the unseen. To state our belief in a God of love. To trust in resurrection. To be able to be hopeful for ourselves and our world.

Faith is not certainty, it is trust and a willingness to go forward into the unknown. Doubts and questions keep us open to the possibility that the truth is even more amazing than we anticipate. When we try to hold onto certainty about facts we limit

God and stifle our imagination.

Easter is a celebration of the great leap of faith, the ultimate act of defiance against despair. No matter what this great unknown holds for us we can trust that it will be all right - Jesus is in it.

And even though our minds cannot yet grasp the truth about resurrection and eternity, we may entrust ourselves to what one hymn writer described as "the silence of eternity, interpreted by love." (Dear Father, Lord of humankind - John G. Whittier)

