

# St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

St. Paul's United  
Methodist Church

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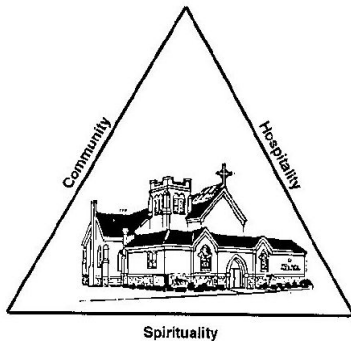
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Februcherry is upon us. I could say it is cold or warm, and I think both will be right this month. But, I won't talk about the weather because I want to give you a heads up that Easter is early this year, March 31<sup>st</sup>, and that means we will be starting Lent on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup> with Ash Wednesday. I am going to spend Lent looking into 'doubt', Adam Hamilton has a new book, *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, and I am going to preach 7 sermons during Lent from the book. If you would like to join me on this Lenten series adventure, you can do one of several things. Just listen to the sermon series, but wait there's more, you could purchase the book, and we could have a lively discussion about 'doubt and faith'.

We are going to start on Ash Wednesday and finish on Easter Sunday. We will look at: *Is Doubt Good or Bad for Faith? Why Do the Innocent Suffer? Why Do Prayers Go Unanswered? Is the Bible True? Doubt and the Existence of God? Is Heaven Real? Does God Love Me?*. Doubt is a part of existing as a human being and there are very few, if any, who have lived life without doubt. It is a part of what makes us human. We have doubts and sometimes, those doubts keep us from harm. Other times, doubts keep us from some of the most amazing moments of life, and our job is to distinguish between safety and missing out. God's promise is to never leave us or forsake us and to be with us until the end of time.

Pastor Parrish Relations Committee met last month, and we talked about some of the things that have gone well here at church over the previous year. We made a list of things, and here is just a sample of that list: We have more active children participating in worship every Sunday morning. Prayer quilt ministry reaching new people with God's love through a comforting ministry. Handicap ramps continue to be built, for those in need. We are reaching more people on Sunday mornings with improved online services, and when people don't feel safe traveling to church, the service is available for your participation. Online giving is available for those who are connected to St Paul's. Nurture is making sure we have special times of fellowship as a church. There were more, but I am running out of room. Keep up the great work, St Paul's, because the Kingdom of God is being mirrored here on earth, in Elida, through your work. Remember, I'll see you in the mission field.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Paul*

## Thought for the Month:

However far the stream flows,  
It never forgets its source.

- African Yoruba proverb

**February 2**



**February 11**

*Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday*



**February 4**

**'Coins for Communion'  
to benefit Samaritan's Purse**



**February 11**

**Food Pantry Sunday**

items needed:

Soup and soup fixings:  
Broth, crackers, noodles etc.

Items are taken to the  
Five Loaves food Pantry  
At The Church at Allentown



## ***Upcoming Events for St. Paul's***

Newsletter  
deadline:  
the **20th**  
of each month

**Christian Symbol**



### **CROSS OF ASHES**

On Ash Wednesday, as Lent begins, worshipers' foreheads are often marked with ashes in the sign of the cross. The ashes traditionally come from burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. In the Old Testament, ashes were a sign of mourning and repentance. Today, some worshipers wipe off the ashes before leaving church, to symbolize being cleansed from sin by Jesus' death; others wear the ashes the rest of the day, carrying the cross of Christ into the world. Reciting Genesis 3:19 often accompanies the placement of ashes: "You are dust, and to dust you shall return."

### **St. Paul's Epistle**

is published by St. Paul's  
United Methodist Church

Subscription Rate: NONE

Secretary	Gail Fessler
Pianist	Lois Cook
Choir Director	Judy Chaffins
Custodian	Dave Decker

**February 14**



**February 19  
Presidents Day**



**Ash Wednesday Service  
February 14 at 7:00 PM.**



**BOOK Club  
Saturday, March 2  
at 9:00 AM**

**"The Water Keeper"  
By Charles Martin**

available in the library for \$8.00  
All Are Welcome!

## *Upcoming Events for St. Paul's*

**Thank you to everyone who left money on our  
"Hallway Heifer"**

This year Miss Shirley's Sunday School Class chose the following animals to purchase with the \$390 that was collected in 2023: one to three shares of the following animals; a heifer, fish, water buffalo, goat, sheep, pig, garden seeds, honeybees and a flock of chicks. Thank you to Lena Whetstone for organizing the order and to everyone who donated this year to help families sustain themselves with farm animals.

**Miss Shirley's  
Sunday School class  
Mission!**



## Poems by Fanny Crosby

### 8 year old Fanny

*Oh, what a happy soul I am, although I cannot see! I am resolved that in this world contented I will be. How many blessings I enjoy that other people don't. To weep and sigh because I'm blind I cannot, and I won't!*

### 16 year old Fanny

Fanny after her ban from writing poetry and just after finishing math forever.  
*I loathe abhor it makes me sick to hear the word arithmetic.*



1882

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy  
His child, and forever, I am.*

### Poem about her grandmother

*There are forms that flit before me,  
There are tones I yet recall  
But the voice of gentle grandma  
I remember best of all  
In her loving arms she held me  
And beneath her patient care  
I was born away to dreamland  
In her dear old rocking chair.*

### The Words of Blessed Assurance

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

*Perfect communion, perfect delight,  
visions of rapture now burst on my sight.  
Angels descending bring from above  
echos of mercy, whispers of love.*

*Perfect submission all is at rest.  
I in my Savior am happy and bless'd,  
Watching and waiting, looking above,  
Filled with his goodness, lost in his love.*

Refrain:

*This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.  
This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.*

# Hymn History

## Safe in the Arms of Jesus

Then Sings My Soul" Book 1, By Robert J. Morgan

**1868**

*And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.*

Mark 10:16

On March 5, 1858, Fanny Crosby, the blind hymnist and America's "Queen of Gospel Songs," quietly married Alexander Van Alsteine. A year later, the couple suffered a tragedy that shook the deepest regions of Fanny's heart.

She gave birth to a child—no one knows if it was a boy or a girl. In later years, she never spoke about it except to say in her oral biography, "God gave us a tender babe," and "soon the angels came down and took our infant up to God and His throne."

One of Fanny's relatives, Florence Paine, lived with the poet for six years and could never get her to talk about this. The child's death seemed to have devastated her, and she privately bore the sadness all her life.

~

Years later, on April 30, 1868, musician Howard Doane knocked on the door of Fanny's apartment in Manhattan. "I have exactly forty minutes," he said, "before I must meet a train in Cincinnati. I have a tune for you. See if it says anything to you. Perhaps you can commit it to memory and then compose a poem to match it." he then hummed the tune.

Fanny clapped her hands and said, "why, that says, 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus!'" She retreated to the other room of her tiny apartment, knelt on the floor, and asked God to give her the words quickly. Within half an hour, she had composed the poem in her mind and dictated it to Doane, who dashed off to catch his train.

During her lifetime, "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" was among the most widely sung of Fanny's hymns, and she considered it in a class by itself. She claimed it was written for the bereaved, especially for mothers who had lost children. Often when comforting a grief-stricken mother, she would say, "Remember, my dear, your darling cherub is safe in the arms of Jesus." Rev. John Hall of New York's Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church told Fanny that her hymn had given more "peace and satisfaction to mothers who have lost children than any other hymn I have ever known."

It isn't hard to understand why.

*Safe in the arms of Jesus, safe on His gentle breast;  
There by His love o'ershaded, sweetly my soul shall rest.*



# Faith In Action

## Worship Attendance:

\* RV

December 31, 2023	55	52
January 7, 2024	59	72
January 14, 2024	34	87
January 21, 2024	62	—
January 28, 2024	60	X

**\*RV** - Remote Viewing  
(online viewing)

We are now recording the attendance  
for those watching online.  
This attendance is taken a week behind  
so we are sure to record those who have  
viewed the service throughout the week.

## Financial Giving

Weekly Need for  
Unified Ministry Budget  
\$4,187.00

## Sunday School Attendance

December 31, 2023	7
January 7, 2024	7
January 14, 2024	5
January 21, 2024	10
January 28, 2024	8

## Unified Ministry Giving:

## Other:

December 31, 2023	\$1,400.00	\$1,368.07
January 7, 2024	\$4,830.90	\$659.22
January 14, 2024	\$3,085.95	\$89.00
January 21, 2024	\$1,576.40	\$99.00
January 28, 2024	\$2,217.43	\$385.00

## Altar Flowers

February 4, 2024	Paul & Marla Scannell
February 11, 2024	Jamie & Jan Wyant
February 18, 2024	Gene & Linda Craft
February 25, 2024	Larry & Shirley Moser

## Hospitality Cart

February 4, 2024	OPEN
February 11, 2024	OPEN
February 18, 2024	OPEN
February 25, 2024	OPEN

# Daily Bible Readings

## Thursday 2/1

Psalm 50, 118  
Genesis 16:15-17:14  
Hebrews 10:1-10, John 5:30-47

## Friday 2/2

Psalm 40, 51, 54  
Genesis 17:15-27  
Hebrews 10:11-25, John 6:1-15

## Saturday 2/3

Psalm 55, 138, 139  
Genesis 18:1-16  
Hebrews 10:26-39  
John 6:16-27

## Sunday 2/4

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84  
Genesis 18:16-33  
Galatians 5:13-25  
Mark 8:22-30

## Monday 2/5

Psalm 56, 57, 64, 65  
Genesis 19:1-29  
Hebrews 11:1-12, John 6:27-40

## Tuesday 2/6

Psalm 61, 62, 68  
Genesis 21:1-21  
Hebrews 11:13-22  
John 6:41-51

## Wednesday 2/7

Psalm 72, 119:73-96  
Genesis 22:1-18  
Hebrews 11:23-31, John 6:52-59

## Thursday 2/8

Psalm 71, 74  
Genesis 23:1-20  
Hebrews 11:32-12:2  
John 6:60-71

## Friday 2/9

Psalm 69, 73, Genesis 24:1-27  
Hebrews 12:3-11, John 7:1-13

## Saturday 2/10

Psalm 23, 27, 75, 76  
Genesis 24:28-51  
Hebrews 12:12-29, John 7:14-36

## Sunday 2/11

Psalm 34, 93, 96  
Genesis 24:50-67  
2 Timothy 2:14-21  
Mark 10:13-22

## Monday 2/12

Psalm 77, 80, Genesis 25:19-34  
Hebrews 13:1-16, John 7:37-52

## Tuesday 2/13

Psalm 78, Genesis 26:1-33  
Hebrews 13:17-25  
John 7:53-8:11

## Wednesday 2/14 *Ash Wednesday*

Psalm 81, 82, 119:97-120  
Genesis 27:1-29  
Romans 12:1-8, John 8:12-20

## Thursday 2/15

Psalm 85, 86, 146, 147  
Genesis 27:30-45  
Romans 12:9-21, John 8:21-32

## Friday 2/16

Psalm 88, 91, 92  
Genesis 27:46-28:4, 10-22  
Romans 13:1-14, John 8:33-47

## Saturday 2/17

Psalm 87, 90, 136  
Genesis 29:1-20  
Romans 14:1-23, John 8:47-59

## Sunday 2/18

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

## Monday 2/19

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

## Tuesday 2/20

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

## Wednesday 2/21

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

## Thursday 2/22

Psalm 19, 46, 50  
Genesis 39:1-23  
1 Corinthians 2:14-3:15  
Mark 2:1-12

## Friday 2/23

Psalm 95, Genesis 40:1-23  
1 Corinthians 3:16-23  
Mark 2:13-22

## Saturday 2/24

Psalm 55, 138, 139  
Genesis 41:1-13  
1 Corinthians 4:1-7  
Mark 2:23-3:6

## Sunday 2/25

Psalm 8, 24, 29, 84  
Genesis 41:14-45  
Romans 6:3-14, John 5:19-24

## Monday 2/26

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

## Tuesday 2/27

Psalm 61, 62, 68:1-36  
Genesis 42:1-17  
1 Corinthians 5:1-8  
Mark 3:19b-35

## Wednesday 2/28

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

## Thursday 2/29

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

# Personnel Report 2024

## ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL / FINANCE

Administrative Council Chair: Scott Fessler (24)  
 Administrative Council Secretary: Corinne Piper (24)  
 Finance Chair: Art Holman (24)  
 Financial Secretary: Carole Grapner (24)  
 Treasurer: Margie Best  
 PPR/Nominations: Janna Thompson (25) & Deb Hurd (26)  
 Trustees: Alex McAdams (24)  
 Missions: Tim Piper (26)  
 Nurture: Judy Chaffins & Jan Wyant  
 Christian/Higher Education: Jan Wyant  
 Lay Leader: Dan Best (26)  
 Lay Member to Annual Conf.: Linda Craft (26)  
 Members-at-large: Norm Grigsby  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell

## PPR/NOMINATIONS

Co-Chairperson: Janna Thompson (25)  
 Co-Chairperson: Deb Hurd (26)  
 Lay Leader: Dan Best (26)  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell  
 Myrna Metzger (24) Susan Nartker (24)  
 Virginia Hollar (25) Linda Craft (26)

## TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Alex McAdams (24)  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell  
 Slone Whetstone (24)  
 Lois Cook (25) Jamie Wyant (25)  
 Vicki McAdams (26) Larry Moser (26)

## WORSHIP TEAM

Pastor: Paul Scannell  
 Choir Director: Judy Chaffins  
 Musician: Lois Cook  
 Altar Guild: Vicki McAdams  
 Liturgical Arts: Myrna Metzger  
 Communion Stewards: Steve & Tracy Sdao  
 Head Usher: Larry Moser

## MISSIONS

Chairperson: Tim Piper (26)  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell  
 Secretary: Corinne Piper (26)  
 Austin Clark (24) Norm Grigsby (24)  
 Jamie Wyant (25)

## TECH TEAM

### VISUALS:

Judy Chaffins  
 Tim Piper  
 Benjamin Rife  
 Jamie Wyant

### FACEBOOK LIVE:

Scott Fessler

### SOUND:

Alex McAdams  
 Steve Sdao  
 Jamie Wyant

## CHRISTIAN/ HIGHER EDUCATION

Chairperson: Jan Wyant  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell

*Thank You!*

**Thank you to everyone serving on Committees. Your time, talents, and dedication to keeping St. Paul's running smoothly is greatly appreciated!**

## OFFERING COUNTERS

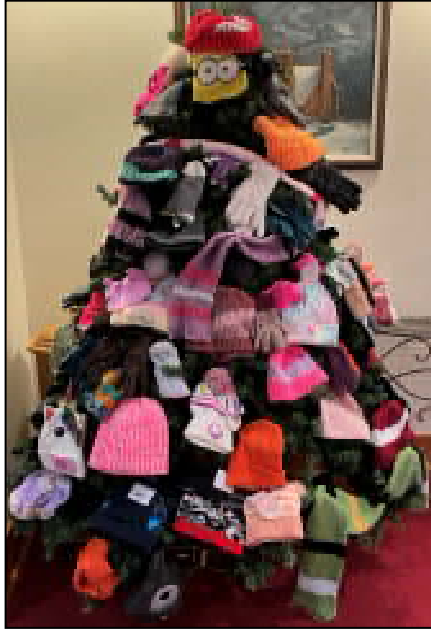
Finance Chair: Art Holman  
 Dan Best Gene Craft  
 Scott Fessler Jamie Wyant

## NURTURE

Co-Chairperson: Judy Chaffins  
 Co-Chairperson: Jan Wyant  
 Pastor: Paul Scannell



# Missions



## Mitten Tree Report:

Thank you to everyone who made or bought gloves, mittens, hats, headbands, shawls and scarves to donate to our Christmas Hat Tree this year! Thanks to you, someone in our community will have warm apparel to wear during the winter. The Items were delivered to Our Daily Bread and the Cross roads Crises Center for women and children. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! Here are the totals of donated items:

36 knitted stocking caps; 21 kids and women's gloves; 14 kids hat and glove sets; 8 men's gloves; 4 knitted scarves; 2 pairs of socks.

## RAMP MISSION

A ramp was built at 568 Orena Ave in Lima on January 15th, in the bitter cold temperatures.

Thank you to everyone who braved the cold and thanks to Jamie Wyant for heading up the ramp projects.

*Thank you!*



# Crafty Creatures

## Crafty Creatures Small Group

*By Shirley Moser*

Steve was the head of education at the time they were starting groups and asked for my help. At the time they preferred, if possible we meet in homes. To help out I approached Larry and asked him if we could use our house, thinking "it's going to fizzle out in a few months", That was about 15 years ago. Larry continues to support our group in so many ways.

The "Crafty Creatures" thank everyone for your continued support, without you we couldn't continue delivering quilts and prayer shawls to those in need. If our records are correct we have delivered over 1,800 quilts. We may do the work but all of you have given us the opportunity to continue our mission.

Again this year you, the congregation and friends, have not disappointed. After our expenses from the candy sales in December, we had a profit of \$1,078.50.

Thank you!  
from the "Crafty Creatures" small group.



A Wednesday evening spent packing candy and sorting out the many orders, to prepare for pick-up on that Saturday!



Nine quilts were blessed during worship, January 21, to provide comfort to the families at Family Promise.



## Connecting with

The Steiner family would like to thank all of you that carried us thru this time of loss. We are very thankful for all your prayers, visits at the hospital, phone calls, and voicing concerns. We thank you so much for helping to make a great funeral lunch, I was so proud of our church.

When we left the hospital in 1986 the doctors told us Mary would live two years, never three. So she started to set goals in which she wanted to see. Brian and Christie finished high school, went to college, Christie got married, both finished college, Brian stayed in Columbus, Jim and Christie moved back home, Christie did one year of teaching, three grand boys came along, two in college and one a senior in high school. Plus, she did the fair and went camping a lot. Now she said she had seen it all, she was happy with her life.

In the past year, Mary's health started to decline, and by Thanksgiving, it was slipping really quickly. She had a great Christmas with all of us. Then two weeks later she could not transfer, which started her journey at St. Rita's.

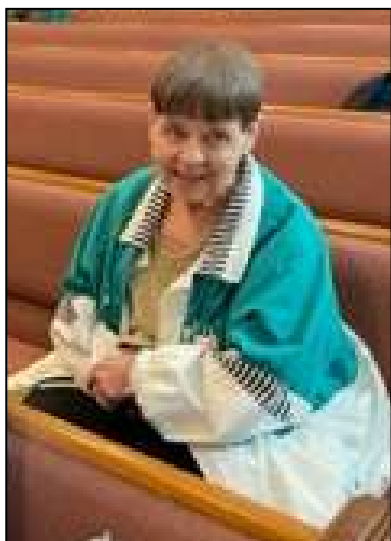
I thank all of you that carried us thru that. One visit by Pastor Paul, he just came and set with us, not saying a word, maybe ten. When he left Christie said that was the best visit because his presence was there.

Mary would not die because our presence was there, we went home and she passed.

All of you who came to the visitation and said so many kind words were greatly appreciated. Most of the words I probably have forgotten, but I can remember your presence. What I am trying to say is your presence is by far worth more than your words to me.

I thank you all for letting the Lord work thru you, to carry us thru this time of great hurt.

The Steiner Family



Dec. 20, 1946—Jan. 20, 2024





## The People of St. Paul's

Dear St. Paul's Family,  
Thank you so much for all your prayers and concerns during my recent surgery. Your prayers, cards, calls, and beautiful flowers were so appreciated. Special thanks to Pastor Paul for visiting me.

God Bless all of you for your thoughtfulness,  
Martha Vazquez

*Thank You*

Dear Crafty Creatures,  
You are special ladies. I so appreciate the beautiful quilted blanket.

Thanks and God Bless you,  
Martha

## Remember in Prayer

### Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Gary Adams  
Shirley Moser  
Jan Sodders

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

Gary & Shirley Adams  
Ted & Jan Sodders

### In the Military & Missions

Nathan Stewart

*With Sympathy*

With Sympathy to Sue and Tim Theodore, Jenni and Michele and families, on the passing of Sue's mother, Phyllis Kaeck, on January 12. A memorial service was held on January 18. Cards may be sent to 3472 Providence Circle, Lima, OH 45801.

*Thank You*

Thank you to our church family for the support with the passing of my mother. We felt very loved seeing so many of you and reading your notes. Thank you, especially for the wind chimes, which will remind us of her. And the girls appreciated catching up with so many familiar faces.

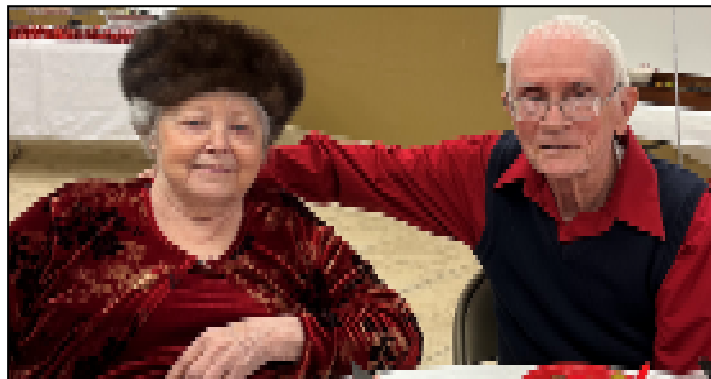
Sue, Tim, Jenni, and Michele Theodore



The choir celebrated Lois Cook's birthday with flowers and an apple with candles, and of course singing, Happy Birthday!

### Happy 95th Birthday! Norm Grigsby

The Grigsby family had a Celebration with a trivia game 'who knows Norm best', a pianist, singing and dancing, photos, cake, and Norm's Birthday speech!!



# Meetings

February 6, 2024  
Trustees ..7:00 PM

February 7, 2024  
Worship Mtg..  
10:00 AM

February 19, 2024  
Ad Council/  
Finance ...7:00 PM

NO PPR

NO Missions

Sundays  
Hospitality..9:30 AM  
Worship...10:00 AM

Wednesdays  
Chancel Choir...7:00 PM

# FEBRUARY

# 2024

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1	2 Barb Schade	3
4 Cyndi Smith	5 Don Irvin	6	7 Gary Hurd Joshua Murphy	8 Cari Metzger	9 Michelle Grapner	10 Caroline Stengel
11	12	13	14	15 William Weaver Tara Gaghen	16	17 Doug Fox
18 Sherilyn Ellinger	19	20 Greyson McAdams Ron Steiner	21	22 Andrew Piper	23	24 Heather Selover
25	26 Addison Chaffins	27 Anna Selover	28 Makayla Bok Kate Stengel	29		





# Featured Recipes from St. Paul's Great Cooks

## Orange Salad

*By Mary Steiner*

Ingredients		Instructions
1- 6oz. box	Orange Jello	First cut up circus peanuts into small pieces, then pour boiling water over jello and stir to dissolve. (on stove). Add peanuts and stir until dissolved.
3 cups	Hot water, boiling	
30	Circus peanuts (cut up)	Add pineapple and juice, let set until jelled, then add 9 oz. cool whip.
1-#2 can	Crushed Pineapple & juice	
1-9oz.	Cool whip	Pour into pan or mold to set.  *Linda Craft made this for the luncheon following the memorial service.*

## Brown Sloppy Joes

*By Corinne Piper*

Ingredients		Instructions
1 1/2-2 lbs.	Ground beef	Brown and drain ground beef. Mix together other ingredients. Heat mixture.
1 can	Mushroom soup	
1 can	Chicken and rice soup	
1/2 pkg.	Onion soup mix	
2-3 Tbl.	Ketchup	
1 Tbl.	Mustard	



# KIDZ KORNER

## HEART strings

Make this heartfelt craft as a decoration or gift.

### What you need:

- Yarn
- Scissors
- Parchment paper
- Baking sheet
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ½ cup water
- Adult help



### What you do:

1. Cut yarn into 12-inch pieces.
2. Place cookie cutters atop a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Combine cornstarch and water in a saucepan. Heat mixture over medium heat, stirring until thick and smooth. Remove from heat and cool to form a "glue."
4. Dip each piece of yarn into the mixture to coat completely. Squeeze off any excess.
5. Place yarn in the cookie cutters, allowing pieces to cross and loop within the heart. Add more until the cookie cutter is filled and the yarn looks like a heart.
6. Remove cookie cutters and bake the sheet for two hours at 150°F, or until hearts are dry and hard.



## CONNECTED BY LOVE

God's Word is filled with messages about love, which connects us to God and to one another.

*Directions: Draw a line from the beginning of each Bible verse (on the left side) through the heart to the rest of the verse (on the right side). Use the Scripture references for help.*

- a. We
- b. Above all,
- c. My command is this:
- d. And over all these virtues put on
- e. Greater
- f. See what great
- g. There is no fear in



1. each other as I have loved you. John 15:12
2. has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. John 15:13
3. But perfect love drives out fear. 1 John 4:18
4. each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8
5. the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! 1 John 3:1
6. because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19
7. which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:14

Answers: a, b, c, d, e, f, g

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

105 E. Main St.  
Elida, OH 45807

\*Return Service Requested

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

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

**Our Facebook page**  
**Elida St. Paul's Church**

**Twitter Account**  
**@ESPCHURCH**



## Living Our Faith



### God-shaped Hole

Have you ever neared the completion of a jigsaw puzzle, only to discover that a piece or two is missing? That's an apt visual for what it's like to live without God. Blaise Pascal, a 17<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher, observed: "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ."

Centuries earlier, St. Augustine proclaimed "Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee." And in the Old Testament, the writer of Ecclesiastes expounded on the meaninglessness of earthly striving and material pursuits. Only God's Spirit can fill our emptiness and satisfy our eternal longings.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full," says Jesus in John 10:10 (NIV). He alone provides the solution for emptiness. What comfort to be filled with — and to find our fulfillment in — our Savior!