



# Saint Paul's Possibilities

January 5, 2023

News & Ways to Plug In

## Powered by Grace and Coffee

Pastor Timothy Hogan-Palazzo

Dear Faith Family,

It is not often I share other's writing in its entirety, however our very own Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, in her column this week, captured what I was just preparing to write. So instead of reinventing, I wanted to share her words and my sentiments, almost verbatim. So, please enjoy this week's message as we "cling to Christmas."

Peace & Blessings, Pastor Tim

*"Where is the child who has been born King of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising and have come to pay him homage. (Matthew 2:2, NRSV)*

The retail world around us is already preparing for Valentine's Day. We Christians cling to our Christmas season and to the Holy Day of Epiphany, swimming like salmon against a very strong current. Epiphany remains important to those who follow the liturgical calendar (especially the Eastern Orthodox churches) and traditionally it was a celebration of the reception of the gospel by the Gentiles. The visit of the Magi to the toddler Jesus symbolized the exposure of the gospel to all the world. The Magi were likely Zoroastrian priests who consulted the cosmos to ascertain upcoming events of importance to various kingdoms within Persia. They would have been well respected and well connected.

The Magi are a compelling image for beginning a new year since they are models of seeking. Their social position allowed them to spend time in discernment, exploration, and drawing conclusions. That included reaching consensus about events of significance in other lands and other religions. Their discernment led them to be seekers – in this case, to travel far to find the child who was born King of the Jews.

I like to meditate on the image of the Magi as seekers and their singular focus on one star over Bethlehem. My own focus on seeking Jesus has not been nearly as single-minded. I confess to starting the journey

over and over again. I am drawn aside by work demands, personal anxieties, and general lassitude. The challenge to determine which star we should be following is daunting when the world is crammed with false stars that shine very brightly. Staying on track is challenging amidst the flash and din. Truly our world is full of so much distraction (like sparkly Valentine's Day cards!) that our window for reflecting on Epiphany and what star we are following is often a narrow one that passes quickly.

This is a time of spiritual discernment well worth our effort. Refocusing on the star to follow and seeking Jesus despite all the world's distractions will bring us to a place of grace, "no matter what star you've followed, no matter how far you have walked, no matter how lost you got..."<sup>[1]</sup> That place of grace and the company of Jesus may be found in a stable, a house, or even a church. Make time to consider what and who you are seeking this Epiphany. The Magi set their focus on the horizon and a star and began their journey. May we do likewise."

Peace, Carrie



[1] From a Sanctified Art resource (<https://sanctifiedart.org/>) used by Rev. Katie Cort at Grace UCC in Lancaster, January 1, 2023.

## Would You Join Us in Praying For...

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Dorothy Anderson      | Greyson Greenawalt     |
| Linda Beaver          | Joanna Johnson         |
| Judy Brown            | The Leeser Family      |
| Heather Council       | Katy Mahon             |
| The Engle Family      | Kasey Milheim          |
| Gail Ernest           | Newton/Anderson Family |
| Gladys Fawcett Family | Betsy Pullen           |
| Terri Fisher          | Chuck Schworer         |
| Dave Fulton           | Carolyn Wuerdeman      |

## Sharing Our Gifts

### January Little Red Wagon

For the month of January, the focus for our little red wagon will be for gas cards for Sunoco, Turkey Hill, Weis, or iFuel. We often get calls or have neighbors and family in need. Your help in this way will go a long way to showing God's love to others.

## On the Journey Together

### Sunday, January 8 - Epiphany

"Epiphany Sunday." Join us as we explore the Wisemen's journey to Bethlehem "from a distant home." The Chancel Choir returns as well as confirmation and youth & family night on this evening.

### Sunday, January 15 - New Member Sunday

"Baptism of Our Lord Sunday." On this Sunday we will baptize and welcome new members. If you have not already reached out to Pastor Tim (or even if you have), let him know your intentions and set up a time for questions about membership.

### Sunday, January 22 - Following Worship

"Annual All Church Meeting, Luncheon, and Celebration of Saint Paul's Ministries." Join your faith family for our Annual Meeting following worship and then for a potluck lunch and celebration of all of our church ministries of 2022 as well as a look ahead to 2023!

### Sunday, February 19, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

The theme for this year's "Talent Show, Spaghetti, and Mama Palazzo's Meatballs" is "Spaghetti on the Farm," and Gloria Lehman says the Palazzo's won't be the only ones cooking something up. Yep, believe it or not, this annual event will be here before we know it! Start planning now for the talent/gift you would like to share. And, start dreaming about Mama Palazzo's Meatballs!! *buon appetito!* If you are dreaming up a talent, contact Gloria Lehman.

### Fun in Fellowship Hall, aka Coffee Hour

Each Sunday 10 a.m. to 10:30 and 11:30 to 12 noon, join your church family around the tables. We promise, you won't leave church hungry. If you would like to sponsor Coffee Hour or help in any way, please contact Donna in the church office. The next available Sundays open for sponsorship are January 22 and 29. Family members will join you in the kitchen to help set up and prepare the coffee.

## Thank You

*"To everyone at Saint Paul's Fresh Express Food Distribution ... You all make a difference. Thank you, each one, for giving of yourselves." ~Collette Brandt & Okie*

*"Thank you to the congregation of Saint Paul's for making your sanctuary available for my ecclesiastical council and ordination, a special day in my faith journey. And, thank you for all you did with the refreshments for fellowship following. I am truly blessed to have friends like you." ~ Jeff Hauck*

*"Saturday afternoon (before Christmas) our door bell rang and a beautiful flower arrangement was handed to me. We want to thank our wonderful church family again for all you have done for us. We are now in Milton but it will take time to feel like home." ~ Christmas Blessings, Bob, Barb, and Bailey Koch*

## Stewardship

### Gifts & Offerings January 1, 2023

To all who offer their time, talents and gifts to create this community, our special thanks! It is good always and everywhere to give thanks to God.

Attendance on LIVE: 250

Virtual Reach: 1,817

Attendance In Person: 66 (2 Visitors)

Plate Giving \$ 1,190.00

Loose Plate \$ 99.00

Online Giving \$ 592.93

Operational Total \$ 1,881.93

Restricted Giving \$ 90.00

Total Giving \$ 1,971.93

*Offering Envelopes are here! If you are a person or family who likes to use offering envelopes, we have them available again. The envelopes are not person specific and may be used by anyone. Each box contains 52 envelopes and may be picked up on Sunday morning, ask an usher, or anytime during the week, just check in with the office. As always, thank you for all you do and all the ways you support this, your faith family!!*

**Special Note:** Your Pastor and Consistory are working hard to have updates on property and building to share with you as a part of our celebration on January 22 following worship. We hope you will plan to be here as we celebrate ministries of 2022 and explore plans for our future.

## Upcoming Worship

### **January 8, 2023 - Epiphany**

*"Crossing Boundaries"*

Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

Worship Leader: Lisa Bernard

Lector: Merle Kay Englehart

Acolyte: Kister Family

Flowers: Available

Coffee Hour Sponsor: Franciscus Family

Offering Counter: S. Brown; D. Spear

### **January 15, 2023**

#### **Baptism & New Member Sunday**

*"He Gets Us"*

Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 3:13-17

Worship Leader: Lisa Bernard

Lector: Nora Hockenbrock

Acolyte: Skylar Ritter

Flowers: Available

Coffee Hour Sponsor: Arnold Family

Offering Counter: A. Mahon; D. Spear

**January Greeter/Usher Team:** Steve & Robin Brown, Chris & Jen Arnold, Amy Mahon, Sue Mahon, George Mull, Carol Clewell

## Saint Paul's Celebrations

### Wishing Happy Birthday to...

January 6 – Brad Gill

January 8 – Steve Anderson

January 8 – Ken Bennett

January 9 – Ryan Arnold

January 13 – Ray Leeser

January 13 – Piper Wolfe



### Wishing Happy Anniversary ...



January 3 – Gary and Donna Bennett

If you are considering official membership in this faith family or have questions about baptism, please reach out to Pastor Tim as soon as possible. You may reach him via the church office (570-568-1433) or at:

[pastortim@spuccwm.org](mailto:pastortim@spuccwm.org)

*Our next New Member Sunday is January 15.*

*January 1 Worship – The Gill Family sharing the light; Colleen and kids children's moments; Sharon and Shelley sharing special music; and Elias playing the "The Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth"*



*Saint Paul's United Church of Christ*   
Church Address: 1125 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847  
Church Office Contact: 570-568-1433 / [admin@spuccwm.org](mailto:admin@spuccwm.org)  
Pastor's Email: [PastorTim@spuccwm.org](mailto:PastorTim@spuccwm.org)  
Church Website: <https://www.spuccwm.org>

## Faith & Family -Time & Talents

#spuconthejourneytogether

Whether your interest involves music, fellowship, faith formation, and/or service to others, we believe a full-life faith community includes them all. We invite and encourage you to consider joining us for one or multiple opportunities as we begin the new year. There's lots to explore and do as a faith family gets to know and grow deeper relationships together. If there's something you want to learn more about, call the office, ask questions, explore ways to get connected and enjoy some family time. All groups are open, so please check out as many as you would like and just come and be. And if you are already a part of one of these groups, invite others to join you, if there's something missing you may be interested in, let us know that as well, for we aren't the same when you are not here.

*Gearing up for winter, many events return this week. Check out these details.*

### Faith Formation

- **Sunday Morning Jump-Start** – Meeting at 9:15 a.m. in the Parlor
- **Children's Church** (ages 3 to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) – during a portion of our 10:30 a.m. Worship
- **Confirmation** – Meeting at 5 p.m. each Sunday evening through May and returns on January 8
- **Youth & Family Gatherings** – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 5 to 7 p.m. January 8 and 22
- **(New) Quarterly Special Events** – 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> graders, select Sundays 5 to 7 p.m.
- **Monday Morning Reflections** – Meeting at 11 a.m. in the Parlor and returns on January 9
- **Wednesday Interactive** – Meeting at 6:05 p.m. in the Parlor and returns on January 11
- **(Coming Soon) Happy Hour – Wine & Wisdom** – Date and Time TBD (a regular small group gathering)

### Music

- **Chancel Choir** – Rehearsing at 9 a.m. on Sundays in the Sanctuary choir loft.
- **Bell Choir** – Wednesdays at 5 p.m. in the Music Room and returns on January 18

- **Children's Choir** – Returns on January 15 and each Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in the music room

### Fellowship

- **Sunday Morning Coffee Hour** – Every Sunday 10 a.m. in Fellowship Hall
- **Faith Family Lunch** – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of each month immediately following Worship. Join us on January 22 for turkey, waffles, mashed potatoes and a 2022 celebration of ministries
- **Friends Who Breakfast** – 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. (returning March 2023)
- And we can't leave out the occasional **Community Research Project** – Dates and Times TBD

### A Way to Serve Others

- **Volunteer Monday** - Every level of assistance is needed, and we have a great time in fellowship and laughter. Come, roll up your sleeves and get the week started with us.
- **Blood Mobile Canteen** – Select Wednesdays (every other month) and scheduled again for February 1 from 1 to 6 p.m.
- **Fresh Express** – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of every month and scheduled for January 12 and 26
- **The Little Red Wagon** – Available weekly in support of our emergency food pantry and neighborhood needs
- **Sharing Our Tables** – Bi-monthly community meal program in conjunction with area churches and scheduled again for Sunday, February 12

## Calendar – January 5-12

- January 5 – Gladys Fawcett Celebration of Life
- January 8 – Chancel Choir Rehearsal 9 .m.
- January 8 – Jump Start Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
- January 8 – Worship 10:30 a.m.
- January 8 – Youth & Families 5-7 p.m.
- January 8 – Confirmation Class 5 p.m.
- January 9 – Monday Morning Reflections 11 a.m.
- January 9 – Volunteer Monday 2-4 p.m.
- January 11 – Wednesday Interactive 6:05 p.m.
- January 12 – Fresh Express Food Distribution 1-5 p.m.