

THE CLEAR VOICE

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SUMMER 2019

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Before my call to ministry, I wanted to be an optometrist. Mind you, this was a long time ago, probably before I realized how much math and science I would need to study in order to go into a medical field. But yes, I spent a whole day in 8th grade shadowing my eye doctor, who graciously let me help with some of his eye exams (his patients were very patient!) and even treated me to lunch. Thank you, Dr. Gordon!

I don't believe there were optometrists in first-century Israel, but I like to think that perhaps Jesus also shared a layman's interest in the art of eye care. Not only did he restore sight to the blind, but he also had a few things to say about the relationship between seeing well and living well:

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! (Matthew 6:22-23)

He's not talking our ability to read the vision chart without spectacles. This has more to do with what we might call the "eye of the heart." This is about how we see God's presence in the world around us, which – here's the hard part – includes the people around us. The light that Jesus speaks of is not just any light; such references to illumination draw us back to the story of creation in Genesis 1, when the whole creation begins to spring forth from God's word, "Let there be light!" Jesus implies that our eyes are given so that God's creative Spirit might work through them. The last verse has an almost mystical quality, suggesting that our willingness to see God's light in the world outside of our selves is the key to illuminating the divine aspect of our own lives.

Let me bring this down to earth with one of my favorite poems, "The Filling Station" by Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979). The poet begins with a visual sweep of her surroundings, and her eye perceives ugliness before anything else:

Oh, but it is dirty!
—this little filling station,
oil-soaked, oil-permeated
to a disturbing, over-all
black translucency.
Be careful with that match!¹

In the second stanza, we learn that it's a family business. The poet notices that "Father wears a dirty, / oil-soaked monkey suit" and that he is helped by "several quick and saucy / and greasy sons . . ." She is not only talking about the station when she notices that "all [is] quite thoroughly dirty."

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¹ Full text of the poem may be found here: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52193/filling-station>

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

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But then she begins to wonder. Questions arise in her heart. Does this family live in the station? There is a wicker sofa, and “a dirty dog, quite comfy.” She begins to see signs of color and beauty, such as a doily draping a taboret and a begonia plant. Now the questions cascade: “Why the extraneous plant? / “Why the taboret? / “Why, oh why, the doily?” How to reconcile these cozy domestic decorations with the greasy squalor that only a few moments before had disturbed her so?

The last stanza is a revelation:

Somebody embroidered the doily.
Somebody waters the plant,
or oils it, maybe. Somebody
arranges the rows of cans
so that they softly say:
ESSO—SO—SO—SO
to high-strung automobiles.
Somebody loves us all.

And so the eye becomes the lamp of the body. The body and soul of the critical observer are filled with light and made well. The judgmental gaze gives way to a loving eye. It happens when she recognizes that there are signs of love and care all around her, even in a filling station.

What do you see when you open your eyes?
Yours,

Jonathan



Vacation Bible School

July 15-19 from 9:30 am – 12:00 noon

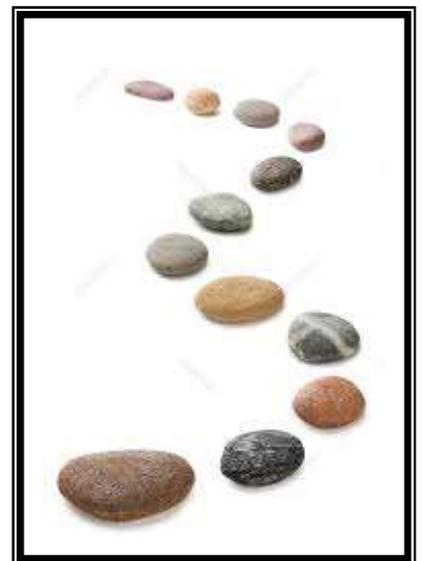
St Paul's is hosting a week-long VBS program again this year for ages 4-10. This year's program is called “Living Stones” and is designed to help children connect the stories in the Bible to real children who live in the Holy Land today. The kids will meet the children of Israel and Palestine as they visit Nazareth, Ein Karem, Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Bethany, Jericho, Cana, Jerusalem. They'll see how the children find meaning in the stories from the Bible that happened in their hometowns.

Each lesson incorporates a letter from a child in that city as well as a games, crafts, activities, snacks, and storybooks. The Bible stories are explained in their historical context and encourage children to consider what these stories mean for them today.

Register online at: <https://forms.gle/gQGPqCe99mzTxReT7>



*Summer
Sunday Worship
10:00 am
Thru Labor Day*



SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Worship Service at 10:00 am

JULY 7

Flowers: given by the Hessingers in memory of Jean Hessinger
Scriptures: 2 Kings 5:1-14 and Psalm 30 • Isaiah 66:10-14 and Psalm 66:1-9 • Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16 • Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

JULY 14

Flowers: Open
Scriptures: Amos 7:7-17 and Psalm 82 • Deuteronomy 30:9-14 and Psalm 25:1-10 • Colossians 1:1-14 • Luke 10:25-37

JULY 21

Flowers: Given by The Ayottes In honor of birthdays for Dennis, Eileen, & Marilyn
Scriptures: Amos 8:1-12 and Psalm 52 • Genesis 18:1-10a and Psalm 15 • Colossians 1:15-28 • Luke 10:38-42

JULY 28

Flowers: Given by The Esposito Family in memory of Anne Esposito
Scriptures: Hosea 1:2-10 and Psalm 85 • Genesis 18:20-32 and Psalm 138 • Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19) • Luke 11:1-13

AUGUST 4

Flowers: Open
Scriptures: Hosea 11:1-11 and Psalm 107:1-9, 43 • Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23 and Psalm 49:1-12 • Colossians 3:1-11 • Luke 12:13-21

AUGUST 11

Flowers: given by Lou Franconi in Memory of his Parents
Scriptures: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20 and Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23 • Genesis 15:1-6 and Psalm 33:12-22 • Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 • Luke 12:32-40

AUGUST 18

Flowers: Open
Scriptures: Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19 • Jeremiah 23:23-29 and Psalm 82 • Hebrews 11:29-12:2 • Luke 12:49-56

AUGUST 25

Flowers: given by the Shoop Family in Memory of Dan.
Scriptures: Jeremiah 1:4-10 and Psalm 71:1-6 • Isaiah 58:9b-14 and Psalm 103:1-8 • Hebrews 12:18-29 • Luke 13:10-17

*It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;
You made both summer and winter. Psalm 74:17*

SUMMER FELLOWSHIP EVENTS

Summer 1st Friday Fun Nights — *On Hiatus for the Summer*

Our next event will be Friday, September 6

Lunch Bunch — Tuesday, July 9 at 11:30 , Tuesday, August 13 at 11:30 am

July 9 - dining at Bistro 24 (108 Marchwood Dr, Exton)

August 13 - dining at Green Street Grille (150 E. Pennsylvania Ave, Downingtown)

Sign up in the social hall. Everyone is welcome!

Men's Breakfast — Friday, July 12, July 26, August 9, August 23

The men of St. Paul's meet at Famous Toastery – Exton Main Street at 7:30 AM on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. No sign-up. Just come start your day with some food and fellowship.

Interfaith Action Fall Kickoff on Thursday, September 19 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Interfaith Relationships And Marriages, St. Elizabeth Roman Catholic Church, 120 St Elizabeth Dr, Chester Springs, PA. Arranged And Sponsored By St. Elizabeth Church. Further Description and RSVP method to be determined.

Church Growth Meeting - Monday, August 5th at 7pm

The Church Growth Group will be meeting on Monday, August 5th at 7pm in the green room. We'd love to have you attend! Topics range from the techy website design and social media, to the basic needs of decluttering and cleaning up, and everything in between. If you have questions, ask Nancy Greger or Mary Raudenbush.

Summer Consistory Meetings

Monday, July 15, Monday, August 19

Boards meet at 7:00 pm Full Consistory meets at 8:00 pm.

Bible Study on Summer Break

The Wednesday morning Bible study is on hiatus for the summer and will restart after Labor Day. Stay tuned for more details.

Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, August 25

As summer vacation winds to a close students and teachers are invited to bring their backpacks to church on Sunday, August 25 for our annual blessing for the coming school year.

"Spring being a tough act to follow, God created June."

- Al Bernstein

STEWARDSHIP & MISSION

Lord's Pantry News

July, Time to Think About School!

July seems a little early to be thinking about school but the Lord's Pantry collects school supplies now so they can be handed out next month in time for the new school year. I know that many, many, years ago when I was a school student it was exciting to purchase the new schoolbag, lunchbox and notebooks, pens and pencils. The fresh new pages were always a bright beginning of the year. The Lord's Pantry tries to give that same happy and excited feeling to the students among their families. They are in need of large high school sized backpacks, notebook, pens, and all the school supplies our own students use.

Thank you so much for all the personal care travel sized items, no individual count but there were many bags full! Questions? Ask Nancy Greger Nancy.greger@verizon.net

Bessie P. Rogers / Harry C. Woodward Memorial Scholarship Fund

Applications are now being accepted for this scholarship to help those pursuing higher education. Application deadline is July 14; scholarships to be awarded on August 11. Church connection (not membership) and enrollment in college or trade school are the requirements for this stipend. Scholarship forms may be found at <http://www.saintpaulsucc.net/index.php/resources>

Monthly Worship at Exton Senior Living –

Wednesday July 10 at 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday August 21 at 2:00 p.m.

600 Pottstown Pike, Exton, PA 19341 (near Marchwood Apartments)

Please join us for a warm, informal time of worship with Exton Senior Living residents on the second Wednesday of each month. Each service includes sermon, hymn singing, and ends with the celebration of Holy Communion.

On-Going

It's not too early to start thinking about our annual Christmas Fair, this year to be held on November 23. You can help by thinking of auction baskets or obtaining gift certificates from stores and restaurants that you frequent.

Deacons encourage you to enroll in St. Paul's electronic giving plan. It's safe, easy, and eliminates weekly counting errors. Download the form from the church website <http://www.saintpaulsucc.net/index.php/resources> or see any consistory member.

Giant gift cards in denominations of \$100, \$50, and \$25 are on sale in the social hall each Sunday at 11:00 AM. Buy the card at face value and use it at any Giant to buy groceries. Giant sells the cards to us at a discount so the church receives 5.00 for every \$100 we sell.

Do you use Amazon for online purchases? St. Paul's earns 0.5% on all purchases made using Amazon Smile and it doesn't cost you anything additional.

St. Paul's serves dinner at Atkinson Men's Shelter in Coatesville on the first and second Monday of each month. Volunteers to join a group are always welcome. Your time commitment is just a few hours every 2-3 months. Contact Diane Battilana (diane@sbaplus.com) for information.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE THRU SEPTEMBER 2

One Service at 10:00 – *Sunday, June 2 through Labor Day Weekend*

During the summer months St. Paul’s holds one Sunday service at 10:00 am while children’s Sunday School is on break.

Children’s Summer Program – *Sundays during Church Service*

In lieu of Sunday School, during the summer we provide a children’s craft downstairs, led by adult and teen volunteers. All programs are preplanned with materials supplied and prepared. If you’d like to come lead a class see Mary Raudenbush for more information.

Pastor’s Vacation

Pastor Jonathan will be on vacation from July 23 - August 8. If there is a pastoral emergency during this time, please contact Louis Franconi (484-354-4439) and/or one of the Elders so that they can be in contact with the on-call pastor.

SUMMER CELEBRATIONS

SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

7/2	Stephanie Madison	8/3	Paul Harrop
7/4	Samantha King	8/4	Frank Perina
7/9	Abby Chester	8/9	Greg Allen
7/10	Robin Madison	8/11	Rajaan Foster
7/14	Maggie Layman	8/12	Steve Mayhue
7/21	Ryan VanderMeulen	8/13	Johanna Baumann
7/24	Evan Battilana Carson King	8/15	Jen Benner
7/28	Lynn Norwood	8/16	Coleman Anderson
7/30	Ed Kuznick	8/23	Robert Propsner

SUMMER ANNIVERSARIES

7/24	Keith & Amy Layman	8/17	Fran & Joe Pluchino
8/12	Ryan & Becky VanderMeulen	8/19	Frances & Barry Chester

CHURCH CALENDAR

MONDAY, JULY 1

6:30 PM Atkinson Center Dinner

MONDAY, JULY 8

6:30 PM Atkinson Center Dinner

TUESDAY, JULY 9

11:30 AM Lunch Bunch

WEDNESDAY, JULY 10

Worship at Exton Senior Living 2:00 pm

FRIDAY, JULY 12

7:30 AM Men's Breakfast
(Famous Toastery – Exton)

MONDAY, JULY 15

Lionville Mom's Club 9 am -12
Church Boards 7:00
Consistory 8:00

MONDAY THRU FRIDAY

JULY 15-19 9:30-NOON

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL –
LIVING STONES

FRIDAY, JULY 26

7:30 AM Men's Breakfast
(Famous Toastery – Exton)

SUNDAY, JULY 28

Backpacks Drive Deadline

MONDAY, AUGUST 5

6:30 PM Atkinson Center Dinner

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

7:30 AM Men's Breakfast
(Famous Toastery – Exton)

MONDAY, AUGUST 12

6:30 PM Atkinson Center Dinner

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13

11:30 AM Lunch Bunch

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

Lionville Mom's Club 9 am -12
Church Boards 7:00
Consistory 8:00

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

Worship at Exton Senior Living 2:00 pm

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23

7:30 AM Men's Breakfast
(Famous Toastery – Exton)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25

Blessing of the Backpacks

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
101 WORTHINGTON AVENUE
EXTON PA 19341

Shine on Me

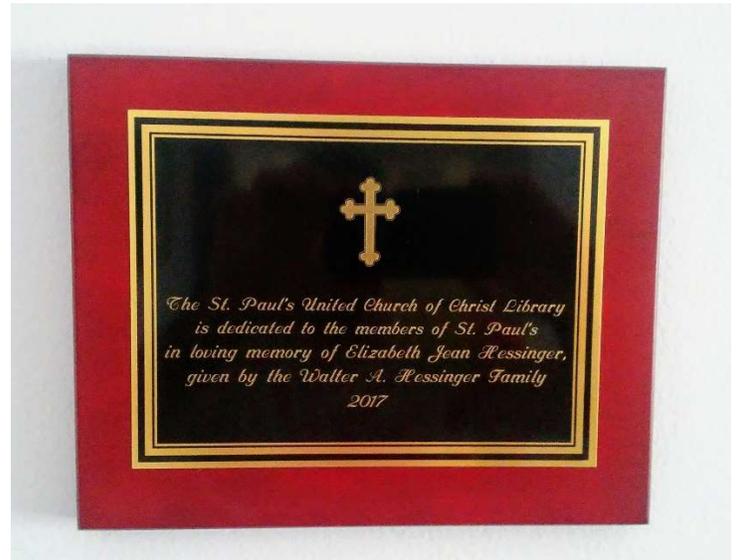
As the sun rises, Lord,
Let your light shine on me.
Destroy the darkness about me,
Scatter the darkness before me,
Disperse the darkness behind me,
Dispel the darkness within me.
Let your light shine on me.

As the sun rises, Lord,
Let your light shine on me.
The warmth of your Presence,
The brightness of your love,
The radiance of your joy,
The shining of your hope.
Let your light shine on me.

As the sun rises, Lord,
Let your light shine on me.
Your light to guide,
Your light to lead,
Your light to direct,
Your light to brighten.

Let your light shine on me.

(From Power Lines: Celtic Prayers About
Work by David Adam)



Children's Library

Next time you visit the Children's Library be sure to look at the new plaque that was given by the Hessinger family. Check back soon for some new additions to the "Wishlist Bookshelf" in the library, and be sure to browse some of the new titles on display. If any of your children or youth have recommendations for additions to our collection, let us know!

Pentecost and Confirmation Sunday – June 9, 2019

Congratulations to our Confirmands

