

Delving deeper

*Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with
mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.
Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast
love.*

Joel 2:12-13



Lent has traditionally been a time to deepen our faith and explore new ways to connect with God. Observing Lent historically was a time when new Christians prepared for Baptism on Easter. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (March 1) and goes until Easter Sunday (April 16). Often Lent observance involves spiritual disciplines such as fasting and prayer to connect with Jesus' 40 days of trial and temptation in the wilderness.

This Lent you are invited to delve deeper into your faith. In worship we will be taking a Journey of Stones. We will look at stories in the Bible that include stones, concluding with the rolling away of the stone on Easter morning.

Another opportunity to deepen our faith will be at the Lenten Retreat called, "Diving In." It will be held on Saturday, March 18, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. We will use the UCC Lenten Devotional *Diving Lessons* as our guide.

In whatever way you choose to observe Lent this year, may you return to God with all your heart and experience God's love in a new way.

Journeying with you,
Pastor Jill

Religion in the News

China is coming down hard on people of faith. Since Xi Jinping came into power in 2012, religious groups, including Christians, have faced persecution—and the punishments have only intensified.

According to a new report by Freedom House, a third of all religious believers in China who belong to faith groups face “high” to “very high” levels of persecution, which range from bureaucratic harassment and economic exploitation to harsh prison terms and death.

“The scale and severity of controls over religion, and the trajectory of both growing persecution and pushback, are affecting Chinese society and politics far beyond the realm of religious policy alone,” said Sarah Cook, a senior research analyst at Freedom House.

The crackdown is due to Chinese officials responding to the threat of Western values and the need to “sinicize” religions.

One Great Hour of Sharing

For 48-year-old Iraq war veteran Robert Z., buying a house was an important step toward recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder. Then the floods came. After completing military service, Robert established his own trucking company. But then depression and stress incapacitated him. He closed his business and moved in with friends. It took Robert years of hard work to get on top of PTSD, but he did it.

“The house was the next step in trying to take care of myself again” Robert said. He found a “fixer-upper” in West Columbia, S.C., and began repairing it.

Then the storms of October 2015 came. Days of incessant rain and wind caused a large tree to fall onto Robert’s roof. The damage opened the house to the continuing rainfall soaking walls, floors, ceilings and furniture. Robert did what he could, but it wasn’t enough.

Then he heard about the Disaster Recovery Support Initiative (DRSI), a joint endeavor of the United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries, Brethren Disaster Ministries and the Disaster Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). DRSI volunteers were happy to assist as part of their work in modeling long-term recovery processes in the wider community. They connected with the emerging local long-term recovery organization. They gutted Robert’s house and repaired the roof. They installed brand-new windows, walls, floor, electricals and plumbing.

“These are not just people talking,” Robert said. “They are really doing something. I am amazed that someone would do it for me.”

“Generous giving to One Great Hour of Sharing is enabling us to reach the most vulnerable families,” said UCC Disaster Ministries Executive Zach Wolgemuth. “It shows, you are here.” We will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Mission Offering on Sunday, March 26.

UCC Summer Camp

Do you want your child or grandchild to have a camping experience where they can learn about their faith while having fun? Outdoor Ministries of Illinois Conference of the UCC sponsors summer camps at Pilgrim Park in Princeton, Ill., and Tower Hill in Sawyer, Mich.

There are camps for children as young as 4 to attend with an adult and independent overnight camps from Kindergarten-high school.

For more information, go to: <http://il-outdoorministries.org/assets/2017-poster-layout.pdf>

Open and Affirming Update

We are hoping to have someone in worship on March 26 from another UCC church which has gone through the Open and Affirming process. They will share their church's story and be available to answer any questions we may have. Plan on attending and bring your questions!

Lenten Mission Project

For this year's Lenten Mission Project we will be supporting the General Synod Service Project on Homelessness by collecting hats, gloves, scarves and socks.

Adult sizes are needed for this collection. We will also collect donations of blankets and small pillows. All of these items will be taken to General Synod this summer and distributed next winter to the homeless throughout the Central Atlantic Conference.

For those of you who don't knit, buying soon while you can still find these items on the shelves is advisable. Please remember that for this project we are looking for ADULT SIZES.

We will do the first clean up of the highway on April 30.

Financially Speaking

The total receipts for the month of February were \$12,130. Our spendable income came to \$12,100, including our OCWM income of \$300.

We had charitable income of \$30 for the month of February. Distribution of the charitable income was as follows: \$20 went to the Hurricane Matthew Mission and \$10 went to the Scholarship Fund.

Christian Education News

The pancake breakfast served by the children of the church school was a success. We served about 70 people and collected \$248 in free will offerings.

Thank you to all the children who helped serve and their parents, and also to Doug Volkening, Ken Volkening, Ryan Smith and Chuck Smith who cooked and the kitchen volunteers who assisted and made sure everyone had what they needed.



A big thank you also goes to the congregation who came out to help support the Christian Education Ministry and the children of the church.

Volunteers are needed to staff the nursery on Sundays. If we get enough response you would only have to do it once a month or

once in a two-month period. Please consider helping out and serving in a new way. Please sign up with Karen Smith.

Every time we baptize a small baby we promise to guide and nurture them in the Christian faith. What better way to keep that promise than to teach? Have you thought about teaching in our church school on Sunday? Would you like to be an assistant and help in the classroom? In either case, we would welcome you to our team. Please talk with Karen Smith about this opportunity.



Thank You

Thank you to everyone at St Paul's for your kindness and support in the passing of Bill Mursewick. We appreciate the love from Pastor Jill and the beautiful memorial service.

A special thank you to the Smith family, Janet Werner, Linda Schambach, Anne Heinrich, Sue Huber, Karen Westerman, Sandy and Dale Volkening, Eileen Andresen, Nancy Cain, Bill Pate, Polly Russell, Jon Kobel, and Vernon Knack for setting up and providing the luncheon after the memorial service.

The cards and the memorial donations to St Paul's were truly appreciated.

Thanks again Love & Blessings
The Mursewick Family

Calling and Caring

Please send cards to the following people for calling and caring:

Florence Drafall;
Audrey Heinrich;
Dr. Bob Kasper;
Lucille Monteith; and
Kate Wirth

Please check the church directory for addresses.

Birthdays

Those celebrating a birthday in the month of March are:

Kate Wirth (March 1)	Nicole Thielke (March 2)
Justine Ackmann (March 8)	Pam Heine (March 12)
Christopher Heinrich (March 13)	Earnest Stagg (March 14)
Liz Patz (March 20)	Ainsley Wilson (March 20)
William Pate (March 21)	Dorothy Levault (March 22)
Ramona Volkening (March 23)	Polly Russell (March 24)

March Greeters

March 5: Dave and Bonnie Starr

March 12: Ruth Volkening and Barb Kamp

March 19: Paula DeFarno and Verona Mursewick

March 26: Wayne and Linda Schambach



Saturday, March 18

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Ministry House

12N268 Switzer Road

Sign up at church or by calling 847-628-6118

We want your pictures

If you take pictures at a church event please email them to Linda at stpauls4me@yahoo.com. Please include any descriptions. Your photos could appear in the digital edition of The Chimes.

St. Paul's United Church of Christ Staff

Jill Terpstra – Pastor

Jon Kobel – Choir Director

Bill Wilson – Newsletter Editor

Linda Becker – Secretary

Gay Bouwmeester – Piano Accompanist

Dale Volkening - Janitor

St. Paul's United Church of Christ Council

Karen Westerman – President

Dan Heinrich – Vice President

Sandy Volkening – Financial Secretary

Myron Meglin- Treasurer

Linda Meglin – Recording Secretary

Christian Education – Karen Smith

Evangelism – Polly Russell

Fellowship/Hospitality – Janet Werner

Mission – Barb Kamp

Calling & Caring – Ginny Mursewick

Properties – Dan Heinrich

Stewardship – JoAnn Pate

Worship – Vernon Knaak