

St. Paul's



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

DECEMBER

2020

THE BEACON



Jesus is the Reason for the Christmas Season!



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Dear Friends,



As 2020 nears its close and a new year awaits us, I want to share some remarks with you about these last 12 months.

In the viral pandemic this past year, our world has experienced an event unlike any other in our collective memory. Our daily lives have been drastically changed. We have suffered many and various losses. I suspect, for most of us, what we have been through was unimaginable a year ago this Christmas. I recall when the tv images first appeared of people in China walking around wearing masks how strange that looked to me. Now, if I see someone in public without a mask, it looks strange. And that seems very minor compared to the business closures, jobs lost, hospitals filled to capacity and restrictions on how we worship, learn, work, celebrate, travel, shop, eat and relate to each other. Of course, there are the deaths. The numbers, especially those reported in our country, are staggering. As I write this, I'm thinking I don't have the words to comprehend or express what we have been through and continue to experience.

According to the news reports, the process of vaccinations has begun. I understand it will be months before "average" people will receive them. I am hopeful that these vaccinations will prove decisive in our battle against this virus.

Our Christian faith is always present for us. Though vaccines are promising, our real hope is in God. With God all things are possible. Nothing, not even death, can separate us from God's love. We have adapted. We have striven to maintain connections with each other as an expression and experience of this love. We have continued to worship, learn, serve, share and grow. We are reminded that we always have a choice, no matter what the circumstances, of how to think, speak and act. By God's grace, we have the power to live beautiful, meaningful and loving lives even in a pandemic. We know this because we are followers of Jesus Christ.

I celebrate his birth this season. He is the true Light that illumines our world. And the darkness shall not overcome His light.

Peace,

Pastor Greg

revgl@stpaulsucccl.org

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Rev. Gregory Lucas, Pastor

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Website: www.stpaulsucc-cl.org

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram: [stpaulsucccl](https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsucccl)

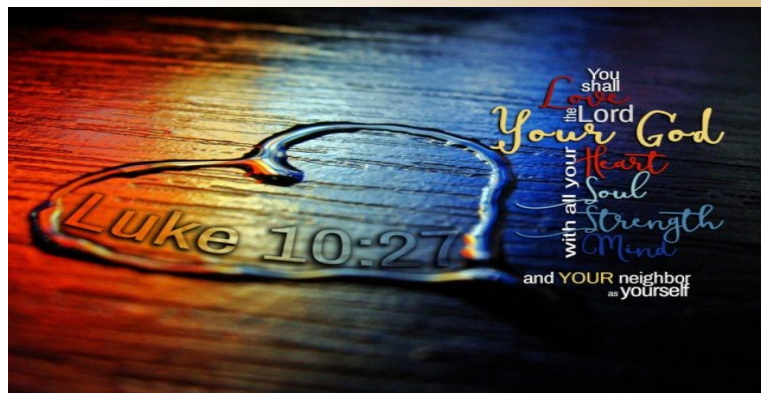
One Sunday Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Via Facebook Live or streaming on website.

Church Office Hours

8:30 a.m.— 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

**St. Paul's Christian
Preschool 815-479-9770**



"Our Purpose"

Despite the limits placed on us by the Pandemic, the work of St. Paul's U.C.C. goes on. We have learned to stream Worship Services, reached out to all of your phone calls, Zoomed Bible study and Men's Christian Fellowship Group and Council meetings continued the work of the Prayer Group, reinitiated Sunday School, assisted District 47 and North Elementary School with virtual learning needs, and manned the Food Pantry. Those are just the activities I'm aware of; I'm sure there are many more that you are part of. The point is the Church Family at St. Paul's is very involved in carrying out "Our Purpose."

That is the reason this year's Stewardship Campaign theme is "Our Purpose." All of us share the purpose God gave us. "Our Purpose" was clearly explained by Jesus in Luke 10:27.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...Love your neighbor as yourself."

We want to thank everyone for their generous commitment pledges for the coming year. It allows St. Paul's to continue to answer God's call for our ministries and outreach to the community. We truly appreciate everyone's support. If you have not yet submitted your pledge information for the coming year, please send in your giving information to the church office. This will allow us to better plan on our direction for 2021 and to achieve "Our Purpose".

The Stewardship Ministry





Hello St. Paul's Friends,

Christmas is about a week away. It feels much different this year, as many holiday activities have been cancelled or postponed until it is safer to hold them. I miss the Mary Circle toffee sale every evening when I have a bowl of ice cream and don't have any toffee sprinkles! Even so, I pray that we will continue on until that time when we can all be back together again.

Council met on **Tuesday, December 15th**. Most of the discussion consisted of plans for 2021, including the annual meeting which is scheduled for **Sunday, January 24, 2021**. Annual reports from the ministries/committees/boards are due in the church office by **Friday, January 8, 2021**.

Once the church office has all the annual reports, we will be compiling, printing and binding the Annual Report, just as we always have, during the second week of January. When this is completed, a copy of the Annual Report can be picked up from the Welcome Center in the Narthex. If you would prefer that a copy be delivered to you, please let the church office know so a drop-off can be arranged. Of course, the 2021 budget and the agenda for the annual meeting will be part of the Annual Report, as usual. The church office will notify everyone when the report is available, however, the deadline for completion is Friday, January 15, 2021, to allow enough time for distribution and review.

At this time, a Zoom online meeting is planned for **Sunday, January 24, 2021** to provide a forum for discussion about the 2021 budget and the Annual Report. The Zoom meeting link will be sent out during week prior to the Annual Meeting. During the on-line meeting, participants will be able to ask and/or answer questions and concerns. The best process for voting for new Council members, new Board of Christian Education members and the 2021 budget is still being determined. More information regarding the actual voting procedure will be forthcoming, as we are still determining the best way to include all members of the congregation in this important process in these unfamiliar times.

Merry Christmas to you and yours!

Jennifer Good, President, Church Council



What is OLAF Doing in St. Paul's Parking Lot? (St. Paul's Food Drive a Success!)

Olaf, well known star of the movie Frozen, was front and center as a participant at St. Paul's November Community Harvest food drive. In November, the Crystal Lake Food Pantry holds their major food drive of the year. St. Paul's, one of the member churches supporting the Food Pantry, did their part to assist in the Pantry's Harvest drive.

Olaf's role was to sit out front in our parking lot to attract the attention of drivers going by. *It worked!* We DID attract the attention of drivers, some who turned into our lot to find out what was going on. A few of these community residents, who were not part of our congregation, returned with food to donate and one generous resident returned with a VERY substantial monetary donation. Great job, Olaf!

Throughout the food drive many of our congregation stopped by to leave food, supplies, and also monetary donations. All were greeted and thanked for their efforts by Pastor Greg who joined Laurie Revak, Cheryll Triefenbach, and Rob Revak.

Our food drive resulted in about **500 pounds** of food that was delivered to the food pantry along with an additional **\$840. of monetary donations**. Pictured is **Pastor Greg** greeting **Rick and Marianne Deacon Davis** and **Laurie Revak** inventorying donations.



We want to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to all who turned out to support this very worthwhile community cause.

Laurie Revak & Cheryll Triefenbach.

Around the Halls of St. Paul's



Altar picture Christmas Eve 2014

The sanctuary and the narthex have been decorated to continue the Christmas spirit as in years past.

Let's continue to pray that in 2021 we will be back doing things as we usually do but this year we want to make the church as close to normal as possible.

Cheryll Triefenbach, Altar Guild Chair



We sold 33 of the \$25 cards from the Giving Tree to be divided between North School & Pioneer School.

We still have some available. They make great last minute stocking stuffers! Don't forget your caregiver, hair stylist, first responder a family member or friend who is in need this Christmas. A gift card always put a smile on a face especially when someone is going through a struggle. Any donation or monetary domination is greatly appreciated.

If you would like to purchase one contact Karen Radovich nuknees@mc.net
Please mail all checks to: St. Paul's UCC and in the MEMO write "Giving Tree"

Thank you to all and stay healthy!

Jean Nulle , Church Life Committee

Let's Celebrate! January Birthday's



1/1 Michele Eich	1/11 Shirley Berghorn	1/17 Lisa Horist
1/4 Jean Hautzinger	1/11 Pauline Jarva	1/19 Derek Sanchez
1/5 Jane Gulino	1/12 Brian Kriegel	1/20 Emily Schaefer
1/6 Christina Coots	1/14 Carey Pagnotta	1/22 Bob Rodriquez
1/6 Eugene Virzi	1/15 Eli Rickard	1/23 Larry Roewer
1/7 Rebecca Burns	1/15 Virginia Covalt	1/24 Hazel Kriegel
1/7 Samuel Click	1/16 Karen Radovich	1/28 Janet Kay
1/8 Carol Heck	1/17 Chris Nulle	1/30 Julie Breeden
1/9 Kelly Burger	1/17 Gary Winter	1/31 Luke Janik
1/11 Martin Barski	1/17 David Burdloff	

Poinsettia Thank You



“Thank you to everyone who donated to the poinsettia fund this year. We know it was a different way but due to your generosity we were able to buy 36 plants. We will have them in place before the Christmas Eve service is recorded, which is going to be on the 20th, so those of you named below feel free to come over to the church during the week of the 21st to pick up a couple of plants and enjoy them in your home before Christmas.



Jan & Mike Czosnyka, Nancy Kramer, Rob & Laurie Revak, Bob & Donna Reber, Bonnie Goldman, Karen & Ken Hansen, Shirley & Bill Berghorn, Lon & Cathy Schmidt, Cheryl & Gordie Triefenbach, Janet Martin, Barb & Ken Thrun, Sondra & Tom Matterness.”

“The altar guild would like to thank Shirley Berghorn for using memorial money that was donated after her mother, Lucille Pedersen, passed away to purchase the lovely new advent wreath stand that you are seeing on the live stream. It is a wonderful addition to the church and will be enjoyed for many years by the congregation.”

Wreath of Friendship

In the St. Paul's archives, the Weather of Friendship was first mentioned in the 1940's. It was started to give support to families in the congregation.

We delivered the poinsettias on Saturday, December 19th. A big thank you to those who volunteered to be a driver and spread our St. Paul's Christmas spirit.

Thank you,

The Wreath of Friendship Ministry



Fall Fair Craft Items



We all know that the 2020 Christmas gift giving season is going to be different this year. With the pandemic still present it is tough for people to get out and shop. Why not support St. Paul's Crafters by purchasing beautiful, handcrafted gifts? These items make great gifts for family, friends, a new baby, coworker, or perhaps for yourself. Please contact **Cheryll Triefenbach at 815-382-9367** and she will arrange for you to pick them up at the church.



GIFT IDEAS

Baby Shower

Christmas

Birthday

New Baby Welcome

Foster Child Donation



Fall Fair Craft Items



Little Girl's



Home Decor



Tis The Season



Holiday Gift Ideas



Holiday Gifts



Bears & Bulls Purses \$18.00

Reindeer Gift Bags \$4.00



**Reversible Runner
\$20.00**

Door Knob Hangers \$8.00



Holiday Gift Ideas



Celebrating 65 Years of Mary Circle

Mary Society was established at St. Paul's in the old church on Ellsworth Street in June, 1955. The Martha Society had been organized for some time and met in the afternoon. Mary Society was part of the Guild and met in the evening in the church basement for ladies that worked or had young children. The first officer elected in October, 1955 was President, Lori Bainbridge, Vice President, Elma Wagner, Secretary, Marilyn Arthur; Treasurer, Pat Wyse; Publicity, Elaine Beach. In October 1956 it was decided not to be part of the Guild but would act as a Circle hence Mary Circle.

Mary Circle did not meet during the summer months but over the years have had many interesting and information programs at their monthly meeting. These programs ranged from book reviews, religions, travel logs, plants, depression glass and many others. One program disaster kits, became a yearly project for CWS. Another program, Mother-Daughter banquets grew into our annual Ladies Night Out. At our yearly September salad supper, we invite all ladies of the congregation and the Congregational Church ladies and in the spring, they invite St. Paul's to their luncheon.

In addition to being informed, Mary Circle has built lasting friendships with the members. By being sensitive to whatever situation they might be experiencing, members have sent notes or cards or meals when needed. At one time a "traveling basket" was a joy to receive. We also kept in touch with our members through secret pals. This began in 1955 and was discontinued in the early 2000's.

St. Paul's ladies have been known as good cooks for many years and the annual Turkey Supper grew large crowds. Mary Circle helped Martha Society with their supper as early as 1958. At that time a bazar was separate, when we moved to the new church a small bazaar was held in conjunction with the Turkey Supper and a bake sale was added until it ended in 1967. The Family Fair and Bazar are an all church project that began in 1968.

Main purpose of the Circle through the years has been women of all ages working together and joining in fellowship to further the work of the church. In the beginning we paid small dues but that ended in 1996. We give quarterly donations to the church so money making projects began as bake sales and rummage sales which we took over from Martha Society. We held bake sales at businesses in town until 1973.

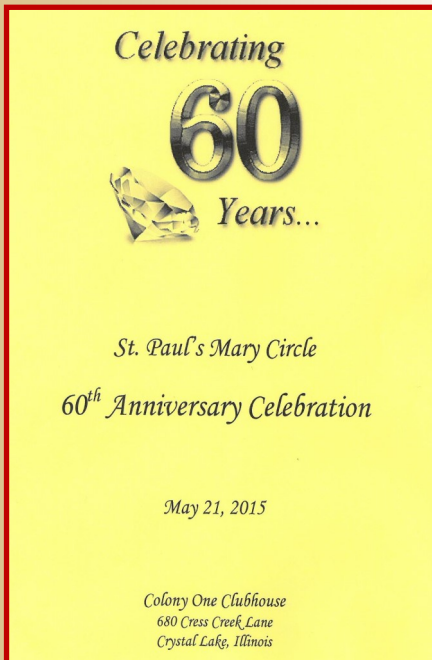
The rummage sales were held at the church twice a year until the late 1960's. The all church rummage sales began in 1972 but have since ended. Many other money making projects were "suppers" And the first one was a BBQ in the late 50's followed by Chop Suey Supper in mid 60's. In 1966 we held our first Spaghetti Supper and tickets were \$1.25 for adults and .75 cents for children. We held them in the Fall until 1977 and at that time changed to the Spring. The menu always remained the same and we advertised "All you can eat!" The project was turned over to the youth. Other big projects over the years have been style shows and salad luncheons. The style shows started in the 60's and were held in the evenings. "Going into Spring and Fashions in Bloom" are just two of the titles. We also held a Bridal Style fair with bridal gowns from church member displays in the narthex followed by a bridal style show as the main event. We began serving the Cary Book Club with a luncheon several times each year at the church in the 1990's. When this concluded we added preordered spaghetti sauce and homemade toffee for our fund raisers. Monies received from these projects were then given to different charities over the years such as the Food Pantry, Pads or Senior Services. We also gave to the church to use for what they needed for equipment such as TV's, freezer, printers, etc. We also donated it to landscaping, lounge blinds and tables along with the Narthex banner. These are just a few of our donations to the church.

November 2020 has been an unusual year and following two meetings, everything was stopped because of the Corona Virus Pandemic. This would have been our 65th year and none of the planned programs happened. We miss these monthly meetings and gatherings. We will hopefully look forward to a new vaccine so the we can come together again soon.

Marilyn Peaco and the Mary Circle Ladies



Celebrating 65 Years of Mary Circle



Church News

TPIRC Update and News

The TPIRC team met this past month to review what we have done over the past 18 months and what we want to work on for 2021. **TPIRC** as you might recall is: **Thriving Pastors in Revitalizing Congregations**. It is a program offered by the Illinois UCC leadership to participating churches, of which we are one of about 35 other Illinois churches involved in the effort to revitalize their congregations.

Hopefully you have found the new website helpful as we try to provide everyone with easy to find information; from past sermons, the devotional messages from Pastor Greg, to the current and past Beacon issues, plus more! Many are attending Pastor's Wednesday evening adult Bible study, that was initiated by our TPIRC team and Pastor Greg. (all are invited to try this out!)

We are looking into other ways we can improve our church communications with each other as well as methods that we can "get together" virtually, since the after-church coffee and treat time is unavailable during these days where we are not capable of in-person gatherings. Watch for more on this soon.

We are looking into bringing back some lay readers to read our Sunday scripture, virtually! We will be looking for help on this soon, so please help out if requested. We will have full details how to do this, and all from the comfort of your home!

We also will be focusing on how to build up our offerings for the youth of our church. We are working on this and the work will continue into 2021.

These are just a few of the items the team has started to discuss. We have more work to do and more details to iron out. We anticipate a busy 2021 and hopeful that we will be able to meet in-person at some point in the new year, which all are anticipating! So... stay tuned!

Rob Revak

Lead, TPIRC Team

Let's Get Social



It's time to get back to being "Social" and what better way to do that than with our church Facebook page. The most perfect socially distant connection you can have. If you have not **LIKED** our page click on the link and give us a **LIKE** [FACEBOOK](#)

I will be actively posting on Facebook starting in the new year 2021 but for the remainder of the month, I thought it would be fun to ask you to post your holiday traditions or day to day Christmas preparation. This can be anything from decorating your home, baking, shopping, out for a walk with your dog, or a movie night with the family and Grandchildren. Post-Christmas pictures will also be great to see. So for now let's see some posts, pictures, videos and add a short description for everyone to see, this is also a great way for me to get to know you all and put a face to a name.

If you are not on Facebook maybe you can ask a son, daughter, or grandchild to help you set up an account and for those of you who are on it, this will be a good time to get more active and stay in touch with your church buddies.

I will start posting very soon and look forward to seeing you on Facebook!

Let's use the hashtag **#stpaulsucccl** at the bottom of all our posts. This will help everyone find us easier as we grow the page.



Happy Holidays to all, **Lena Vocalino**

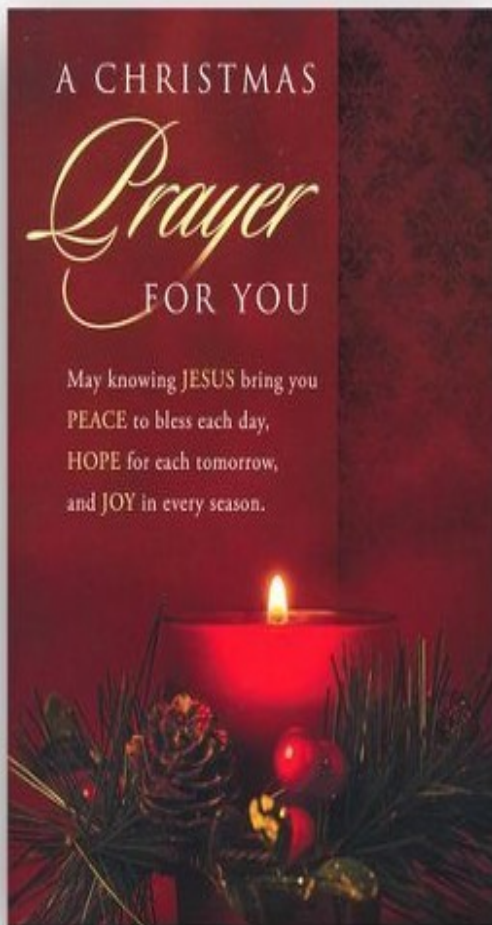
Church News



I received an email a couple weeks ago from my dear friend, Rev. Lois Bucher. Many of you know that Lois is the daughter of the late Art and Fran Bucher, who were on an extended visit with family in North Carolina and connected with St. Paul's via the November 29th live stream church service. Both were very moved to observe that despite the pandemic our Narthex and sanctuary had been decorated as usual for the first Sunday of Advent. Of special interest were Joseph, Mary and Baby Jesus in their traditional location in front of the altar.

Louis commented that those plaster statues were purchase by the Altar Guild of which her mother was most likely in charge at the time. She particularly wanted me to know that though she was only a teenager, she was put in charge of painting them. So I wanted to share with all of you that in this 2020 Season of Advent our St. Paul's message was well received half way across the country and that those figurines depicting the Nativity have been a part of our Advent decorations now for 50 Years!

Karen Radovich



St. Paul's Members

Donna Butler, Ashley Marulli, Michael Eslick, Karen Hansen, Emmeth & Delores Broker, Jan Rickard, Bob & Ginny Covalt, Ginny Katenhusen, Marianne Spencer, Jim Butler, Shirley Huddle, Martha Hughes

St. Paul's Homebound Friends

Martha Hughes, Arlene Kopsell, Barb Biscomb

Deceased Members and Friends

Emmeth Broker, Ginger Jacobson, Walter Sterling, Larry Eslick, Tom Lindblom

Friends

Tom Brown, Miranda, Denise Carpenter, Mike Broker, Mary Ann Benz, Bryan McMahon, Bob & Gail Graves, Chris Rook, Luca Lanford, Christina, Teresa, Brent, Loyce McNutt, Rosie, Jody Oker, Martha Triefenbach, Lisa Almquist, Patty Van Voorne, Sister Vassa, Lily, Ashley Kelley

Military - Stateside

Beth Roxworthy & Todd Whetham

Sponsored Children

Alberly (Dominican Republic), Andrian (Indonesia), Daniel W. (Indonesia), Nicole V. (Bolivia), Nicole S. (USA), Tran Thi Chin (Vietnam), Breny (Columbia), Alfred (Tanzania), Dereje (Ethiopia), Isack S. (Tanzania), Maria, Jobenta M. (Haiti), Emyli (Guatemala)



December 2020

Dear Friends,

Words cannot express our sincere appreciation for the overwhelming donations we received this holiday season, especially with the difficult year we have all faced due to COVID-19.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for supporting our North school families with your generous donations. With your help, we were able to make 42 families' wishes come true this holiday season. In addition to the wonderful gifts, we are fortunate enough to have received additional gift cards for families that will give us the added opportunity to assist our families in need this holiday season and throughout the remainder of the school year.

We wish you could see the joy and gratitude on the families' faces as we present them with these gifts. Your donation means more than just a present under the tree -- it provides relief, peace, and hope for the whole family. No matter the donation, big or small, we are beyond grateful to have such a supportive community!

~ Sending happiness and good health your way ~

Thank You

Happy Holidays,
North Elementary School

I would like to thank my dear St. Paul friends for their many prayers, calls and cards on behalf of my brother Larry's passing.

It is such a comfort to know so many people care. Larry was tragically killed when he had a heart attack while driving his semi truck. Thankfully no one else was injured in the accident.

There will be a celebration of Larry's life in the spring of 2021.

Thank you all so much!

Karen Hansen



St. Paul's Vision

Call to serve

Our

Neighbors' and Members'

Needs by

Engaging as

Christ's people

Through service and Love

Follow Us on Social Media!

Keep up with St. Paul's latest news, information, and connection. LIKE our pages and share our posts on social media.



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John McGuire, jmcguire@matrix-ps.com

NEXT BEACON

January, 20th

All articles are due in the church office
by Fri., January, 11th.



Give the Gift SCRIP

IN STOCK SCRIP CARDS as of December 14, 2020

Amazon	1 @ 25
BP	2 @ \$50
Buffalo Wild Wings	3 @ \$25
Buona Beef	8 @ \$10
Chili's	4 @ \$25
Chipotle	3 @ \$10
Darden – Olive Garden	4 @ \$25
Fannie May	5 @ \$10
IHOP	2 @ \$25
Jewel	5 @ \$25 8 @ \$100
Kohl's	9 @ \$25
LL Bean	2 @ \$100
Mariano's	6 @ \$50
Meijer	2 @ \$50
Menards	1 @ \$100
Mobil	2 @ \$50
Outback	2 @ \$25
PF Chang	2 @ \$25
Panera	2 @ \$10/ 2 @ \$25
Shell	8 @ \$25/ 2 @ \$50
Speedway	1 @ \$100
Stein Mart	1 @ \$25
Subway	4 @ \$10
Target	5 @ \$25/
Walmart	3 @ \$100/ 3 @ \$250

Thank you for your generous donations. We sold 33 of the \$25 cards from the Giving Tree to be divided between North School and Pioneer Center. If you still want to get a SCRIP card for a stocking stuffer, contact me at nuknees@mv.net I can drop them off at the church any time prior to Christmas Eve. As always checks are made payable to St. Paul's.

Karen Radovich

EASY AND CONVENIENT

These products make it easy to earn on the go.

PrestoPay™

The secure online payment system for families that lets them pay for orders and receive e-gift cards and reload their cards immediately.

MyScripWallet™

Our mobile website where families can buy physical gift cards, reloads, and eGift cards. Directly onto their phones great for when you are in line at a store. you can reload or buy cards to go straight to your phone!