

St. Paul's

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

**December
2021**

THE BEACON



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Dear Friends,

Sometimes it helps me to ask questions. Here are some questions that are on my mind...

As 2021 comes to close and a New Year is about to begin, how do I see God at work in my life? How has God blessed me this past year? Where do I see God leading me in 2022?

Can I point to moments in my life during these last 12 months, where God has encouraged and supported me? When were some of those moments? How did I respond to God at those times? What changes has God brought to my life? What has God taken away? What has God given to me?

When I think about the New Year, how do I feel? Am I primarily excited and hopeful - or am I mostly anxious and afraid? Do I feel more settled or unsettled? Do I anticipate God bringing big changes in my life in the New Year? Or do I think God will keep things pretty much as they are?

Is there something I want to say to God about 2021, now that it's almost over? Is there business between me and God that is unfinished? What about 2022? Is there something I want to say to God about the New Year? Is there something I would like to do for God in the New Year?

How would I describe my relationship with God as it currently stands? Does it feel strong or weak? Does God seem closer to me than at this time last year, farther away, or about the same? Why do I think that is?

What am I depending upon God the most for right now? How is God demonstrating His love for me today?

I hope these questions may be helpful to you as well.

Peace

Pastor Greg

485 Woodstock Street, Crystal Lake, IL
Rev. Gregory Lucas, Pastor

Phone: 815-459-5096

E-mail: info@stpaulsucccl.org

Website: www.stpaulsucc-cl.org

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

Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Via Facebook Live or streaming on website.

Church Office Hours

8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Dear Church Family,



As 2021 comes to a close and I reflect back on the many blessings St. Paul's has received this year, I want to express my gratitude to our Church family who, through God's grace and guidance, has helped us to get to where we are today. You all played a part in getting St. Paul's back on track in its journey to rebuild and revitalize our Church community. Since progress is sometimes best appreciated in retrospect, I thought I would review some of the highlights of 2021 and celebrate where we are today in stark contrast to where we were at the beginning of this year. Yes, there is still much to be done and many challenges ahead, but I thank God with all my heart for where we are. It could have so easily turned out differently, and not in a good way.

Flashback to January 2021 when St. Paul's was closed and Council was faced with the daunting task, with the assistance of the Emergency Management Committee, of determining when and how we could safely reopen. Despite the challenge of not being able to meet in person, we weathered the storm virtually, streaming our Sunday worship services online thanks to our exceptional and dedicated technicians, our ever-upbeat music accompanist, and Pastor Greg's steadfast leadership. We even had our first virtual Annual Meeting on January 24th via Zoom—our first congregational gathering since the Church closed in March of 2020. Throughout the bleak winter months and early spring, Pastor Greg and others explored new ways to stay connected and address the spiritual needs of our Church family. Pastor Greg's daily noon devotionals and the Christ Centered Connections groups were another first and served to maintain connection and further spiritual growth, as well as provide comfort during an extremely challenging and frightening time. The Christ Centered Connections groups have blossomed into a vibrant new ministry and continue to contribute to the spiritual growth of those who participate.

On May 2, 2021, St. Paul's reopened for in-person worship. Alleluia! Things were a bit rocky at first and no one was pleased with the restrictions in place, but you all persevered and the Church has remained open safely. Attendance has steadily increased since then and we recently reached a milestone attendance of 87 people, in addition to our virtual audience. We were even blessed with the sight of precious children participating in a revival of our Children's Christmas program! Our talented Adult Choir, Bells, and Brass Ensemble lift us up with their beautiful and transcendent music. Our Kids Konnect Program and its exceptional teachers are helping to attract young families and their children. Our Altar Guild beautifies our Sanctuary during Christmas and throughout the year. And our numerous church ministries and volunteers continue to further our mission of outreach and connection. Thanks to you all and praise be to God!

As we look to the future, we have much to continue to be thankful and hopeful for. As a result of pandemic-related funds obtained through the Paycheck Protection Program 2, generous donations, and increased giving (all of which we are so very grateful for!), we have been able to fund the two new staff positions of Program Director and Youth Director and will present a balanced budget to the congregation for its approval at our January Annual Meeting (which will NOT be virtual!). Our Program Director, Amanda Edwards, will begin January 3rd and we can't wait for you to meet her. Please learn more about her in the meantime by reading the article in this Beacon introducing her. We hope to build on St. Paul's mission of connection and outreach through the programs she will help facilitate and are excited by the opportunities this presents for the continued revitalization of our Church.

And last, but certainly not least, I want to publicly thank and recognize our Council members for their dedication and hard work this past year. You are, in a word, amazing! As we look to 2022, I thank each and every member of our Church family for the role you have played in getting us to this point. Most of all, I thank God for blessing St. Paul's and enabling us to spread the promise and joy of His Word.

Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year to you all,

Nancy Bellis, Council President

Let's Celebrate Birthdays



Nancy Schmitz	12/3
Arlene Kopsell	12/6
William Jelinek	12/7
Milton Diedrick	12/9
John Kennedy	12/12
Adam Kay	12/13
Jared Kay	12/13

Lon Schmidt	12/17
Jo Ellen Roxworthy	12/22
Wendy Domanico	12/22
Eric Domanico	12/25
Marsha Britt	12/27
Rylee Whetham	12/29



Michelle Eich	1/1
Jean Hautzinger	1/4
Jane Gulino	1/5
Eugene Virzi	1/6
Rebecca Burns	1/7
Carol Heck	1/8
Shirley Berghorn	1/11
Brian Kriegel	1/12
Carey Pagnotta	1/14

Virginia Covalt	1/15
Karen Radovich	1/16
Davide Burdloff	1/17
Lisa Horist	1/17
Garry Winter	1/17
Larry Roewer	1/23
Hazel Kriegel	1/24
Janet Kay	1/28
Julie Breeden	1/30
Luke Janik	1/31

Church News

Announcing Amanda Edwards – St. Paul's Program Director



We are very excited to welcome **Amanda Edwards** to the St. Paul's family in the new position as our part-time **Program Director**! In this new role, Amanda will seek to identify, research, develop, and/or coordinate a variety of educational and informational program offerings for the benefit of our St. Paul's family, as well as our local community when appropriate.

Amanda recently relocated back to the Midwest from Georgia with her husband and children, ages 10, 12, and 16. Her background includes both an education career along with ministry experience. She has her BA in Elementary Education and Environmental Sciences from Cornell College, Iowa. As her elementary education teaching career progressed, she was called to return to graduate studies, choosing the Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia to obtain her Masters of Divinity degree with an emphasis in pastoral care. She is presently a Member in Discernment, Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ. Her present goal is to become ordained by the United Church of Christ conference in the near future and complete training to become a certified spiritual director.

Amanda's professional experiences range from teaching to directing summer camps as well as experiences in various ministries which include holding a Pastoral Fellow position with the Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta and the Director of Adult Formation with Trinity Presbyterian Church, Atlanta. Her creative program work has also included developing academic programs for a college-prep boarding school and facilitating an interfaith dialogue group; she also has work experience with Girl Scouts USA and is a lifetime member.

Amanda and her family love the outdoors and are enjoying finding new places in the Crystal Lake area to hike and canoe.

Amanda's interest is to apply her creative talents to research and resource information for program development and offerings. Moving forward, she will work with our Church Council, Pastor Greg, and input from congregation members to best identify programs that would be of interest and/or need by our members.

Amanda will officially start her new role in January, 2022. She will be introduced at our **January 9th** Sunday service. Please join in and give Amanda a warm St. Paul's welcome!

Rob Revak

Personnel Committee

Church News



FOOD PANTRY

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Please call
**Cheryll Triefenbach or
Laurie Revak to sign up**

Refer to the Church directory for phone numbers or call
the Church office 815-459-5096

2022 SERVICE DAYS
8:30 am - 1:00 pm

January, 21	July, 15
February, 11	August, 5 & 26
March, 4 & 25	September, 16
April, 22	October, 7
May, 13	November, 2
June, 3 & 24	December, 2 & 23



**DECEMBER 17TH,
2021 SERVICE DAY**
8:30 am - 1:00 pm
www.stpaulsucc-cl.org

The Crystal Lake Food Pantry continues to help our neighbors in need. We now allow neighbors into the facility to select the food they can use. Masks are required for both neighbors and volunteers, social distancing is encouraged.

During these trying pandemic times the pantry has done a great job adapting and making sure resources remained available.

Food can be placed in the white cart near the Market Place and we will be sure it gets to the pantry. Our service day is one Friday a month. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please let me know.

Thank you for all your support.

Laurie Revak 814-245-6899

Cheryll Triefenbach



Church News

Altar Guild



The altar guild would like to recognize Wendy Manser as a new member. Wendy is learning about the duties involved, and will be subbing and helping out until next May, at which time she will be the member in charge of the month, now held by Cheryll. We are very excited to have Wendy as a member!

We have the new monthly calendar completed with the information of each member and if you want flowers for the month, call the person in charge and make your arrangements.



ST. PAUL'S BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE
Sunday, December 19, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

Worship is filled with remembrance and hope for anyone feeling the pain of loss, or loss of a way of life, or any circumstance that makes finding joy during the Christmas season difficult. This service will be held both in person and on line.

For those of you watching on line, there will be an opportunity to interact virtually on Facebook by providing a name of love one lost, or any pain you are experiencing. Prayer requests will also be received.

Please contact the church office if you are attending in person, so we may provide for everyone. **815-455-5096** or www.stpaulsucc-cl.org Light refreshments will be served after the service. As usual masks will be required.

The Columbarium Committee

Church News



Christ Centered Connection

We are reaching out to our members and friends regarding the new Christ-Centered Connection (CCC) group call CCC Hope. We are responding to the loss of loved ones and friends we have felt over the last couple of years.

I have personally experienced some very meaningful connections from participating in our current CCC groups, not only with members of the group but also in relation to my faith and understanding of what God has to say to me personally.

Donna Butler said it this way, "When I picture the ways in which this group may be helpful, I think of a young man I met a few days after my husband died. He said to me, "I am very sorry for your loss, and even though I never met your husband, I understand loss".

How simple and wonderfully true that statement is! Just as each of us is different, so too is our experience with each loss we face in our lives.

This group meets ***Mondays from 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm***. You will find this experience as an opportunity to connect, explore, discuss, encourage, and share with one another in a Christ-centered way. Please contact Donna Butler butlersmail6@yahoo.com or Jim Henneman james.henneman@nm.com and one of us will respond to your questions and interest.

Jim Henneman

Church News



McHenry County Services...at *YOUR* Fingertips!

St. Paul's **TPIRC** team continues to meet monthly to discuss ways to enhance our church for the benefit of all members and attending friends and also to better connect and serve our community.

In late September we participated (virtually) in the 3rd annual UCC **TPIRC Educational Summit**, sponsored by the United Church of Christ Building and Loan Fund. We were challenged to look honestly at how we are using the gifts our church currently has – including the buildings, all their rooms, and all the surrounding grounds. Dream and pray about what God is calling us to do with these blessings! What are we doing with what we already have?

We also continue to assess our new church website and how to enhance what it offers. The TPIRC team has been researching what additional and useful information could be added to better serve our members.

We have found that our local human services agency, the **United Way of McHenry County**, has an excellent website where you can find help and answers to your needs by simply putting in your zip code. Visit: www.findhelp211.org A more direct, and perhaps easier, method is to just call their directory at: **211**

Dialing 2-1-1 in McHenry County will connect you to a call center that will direct you to an appropriate social service agency or nonprofit organization. Trained specialists can quickly assess your needs and offer knowledgeable information and referral for services including rent and utility assistance, food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, elderly care, financial counseling, job training, and much more. 2-1-1 is simple to remember, accessible to everyone, and available 24/7/365 at no cost.

We will be adding this very helpful information to St. Paul's website. Remember and share! **Dial 2-1-1** in McHenry County for human and social service assistance.

Cathy Schmidt
TPIRC Team Member

Thank You

Wreath of Friendship Thank You



The Wreath of Friendship is an annual event that honors our church family shut-ins and our church families who lost a loved one during the year. Plants and baked goods are delivered right before the holidays to our honored families. This year, we made up **29 plates of cookies** and **bread**s and delivered **poinsettias** for our church family members and friends.

The Wreath of Friendship ministry would like to thank all who made it possible this year by giving your time and talents. Thank you to all those “great bakers” who baked the delicious cookies and breads: **Cheryll Triefenbach, Joyce Lucas, Karen Hansen, Jane Gulino, Laurie Revak, Sue Phillips, Jan Czosnyka, Jennifer Good, Janice Bordignon, Evelyn Winter, Lena Vocalino, Regina Lombardo, and Sheryl Gee.**

Thank you to **Shirley and Bill Berghorn, Nancy Kramer and Jennifer and Ernie Good** for their poinsettia donation.

We would also like to recognize our delivery “elves” **Karen Hansen, Pastor Greg and Joyce Lucas, Laurie and Rob Revak, Jane Dawson, Janet and Jim Henneman and Gary Gee.**

Finally, a special thank you to **Marilyn Peaco** for addressing our Christmas cards; **Karen Hansen and Marilyn** for assembling the cookie plates; and to the many people who donated baked goods and donated funds to purchase the poinsettias anonymously.

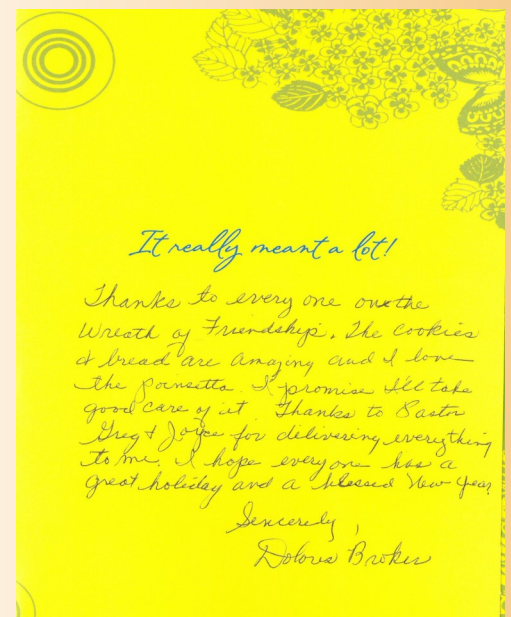
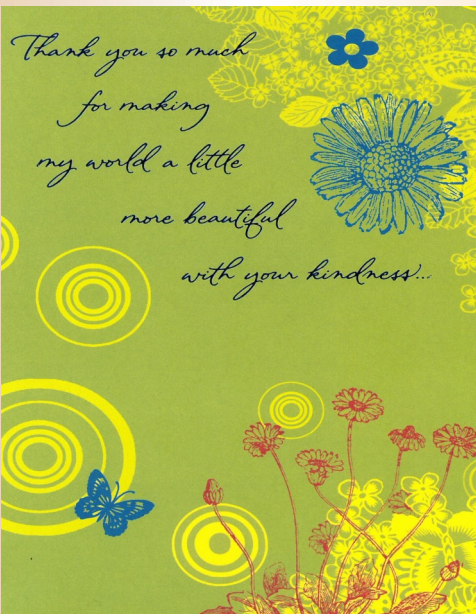
May God bless you all! May our acts of kindness and remembrance spread our St. Paul’s Christmas cheer and bring glory to God’s name.

Wreath of Friendship Ministry

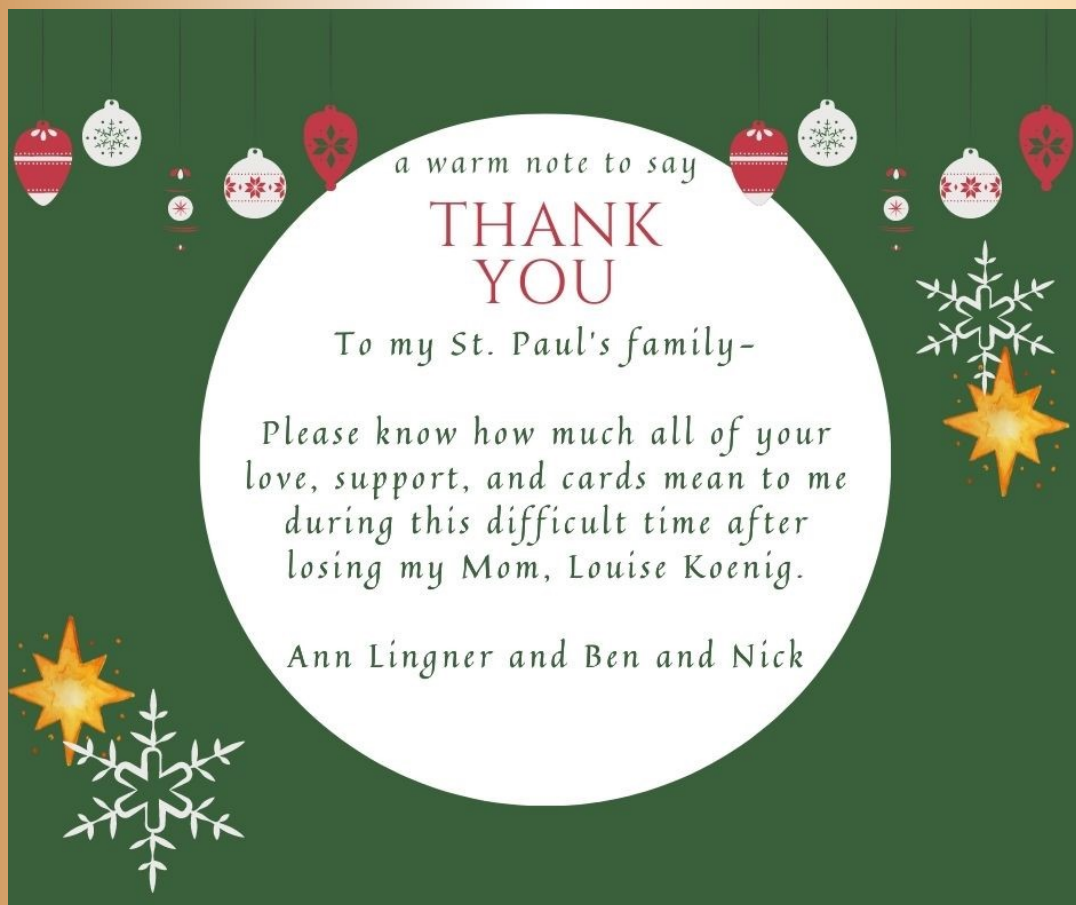
WORDS OF THANKS

My heartfelt thanks to the Wreath of Friendship committee for their kindness. Jane’s delivery last Saturday was a breath of fresh air. I’m so thankful for all the caring people of St. Paul’s.

Donna Reber



Thank You



Usher & Greeter Schedule

**December
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.**

USHERS

DECEMBER 5

Ken Thrun - Captain
Linda Ticknor, Steve Tobin
Greeter: Nancy Lutz
Lay Reader: Elizabeth Speros

DECEMBER 12

Rob Revak - Captain
Laurie Revak, Wendy Dominico
Greeter: Regina Lombardo
Lay Reader: Rebecca Eckhardt

DECEMBER 19

Ken Hansen - Captain
Nancy Bellis, Kevin Kruse
Greeter: Jen & Ernie Good
Lay Reader: Sue Phillips

BLUE CHRISTMAS 3:00 pm

Ken Hansen - Captain
Karen Hansen
Greeter: TBD
Lay Reader: Sue Phillips

DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE 7:00 pm

Rob Revak - Captain
Lori Revak
Greeter: Eckhardt Family
Lay Reader: Amanda Lotesto

DECEMBER 26

John Whetham - Captain
Karen Hansen, Bill Berghorn
Greeter: Marilyn Peaco
Lay Reader: Gary Gee

**January
Sunday Worship
10:00 a.m.**

USHERS

JANUARY 2

Jim Henneman - Captain
Lauren Henneman
Rebecca Eckhart
Greeter: Sheryl & Gary Gee
Lay Reader: Dylan Eckhardt

JANUARY 9

Gary Voss - Captain
Carla Voss
Wendy Manser
Greeter: Margaret & Steve Tobin
Lay Reader: Fred Mullard

JANUARY 16

Ken Thrun - Captain
Joe & Jan Rickard
Greeter: Linda Ticknor
Lay Reader: Cathy Schmidt

JANUARY 23

Arlene Tuscano - Captain
Gene & Lynn Virzi
Greeter: Carla & Gary Voss
Lay Reader: TBD

JANUARY 30

John Whetham - Captain
Jane Dawson
John Vogt
Greeter: Marianne Deacon Davis & Rick Davis
Lay Reader: TBD

St. Paul's Prayer List

St. Paul's Members

Michael Tipps, Anna Mason, Connie Burdloff, Ruth Costello, Jan Czosnyka, Shirley Huddle

St. Paul's Homebound Friends

Martha Hughes, Arlene Kopsell, Barb Biscomb

Deceased Members and Friends

Brian Prather, Louise Koenig, John Sroka, Pat Ichelson, Darlene Olson, Lisa Almquist,
Nancy Thompson, Robert Chappell, Kim Weiss

Friends

Marjorie Birk, Suzanne Olsen, Carl Kazimier, Larry Skipper, David Ainger, Sharon Trainor,
Tammy Moore & Family

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)



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.



Church Staff

Reverend Gregory Lucas
815-459-5096 - info@stpaulsucccl.org

Office Manager, Lena Vocalino
815-459-5096 - info@stpaulsucccl.org

Church Council

Nancy Bellis, Council President
312-493-5144 - nkbconsulting@yahoo.com

Jan Rickard, Council Vice President
815-459-2287 - jrick4@sbcglobal.net

Elizabeth Speros, Secretary
815-341-6979 - elsperos@yahoo.com

Fred Mullard, Treasurer
224-629-3755 - mullard@mc.net

Jennifer Good, Financial Secretary
815-245-3287 - jennifer.a.good@gmail.com

Amanda Lotesto - amandalotesto@yahoo.com

Jane Dawson - dawson247@comcast.net

Rob Revak - robrrr52@gmail.com

Gary Gee - ggwn@aol.com

NEXT BEACON

January, 14, 2022

All articles are due in the church
office by January 7th



Give the Gift of SCRIP

IN STOCK SCRIP CARDS as of December 3, 2021

Amazon	9 @ \$25
Bath and Body Works	2 @ \$25
Buffalo Wild Wings	3 @ \$25
Buona Beef	7 @ \$10
Chili's	7 @ \$10
Darden	6 @ \$25
Dunkin' Donuts	6 @ \$10
Fannie May	11 @ \$10
Home Depot	2 @ \$100
IHOP	2 @ \$25
Jewel	1 @ \$100
Kohl's	8 @ \$25
LL Bean	2 @ \$100
Lou Malnati's	1 @ \$50
Mariano's	5 @ \$50
Menards	2 @ \$100
Mobil	5 @ \$50
Panera	3 @ \$10/ 1 @ \$25
Red Lobster	8 @ \$25
Sephora	2 @ \$25
Shell	2 @ \$25/3 @ \$50
Speedway	6 @ \$25/1 @ \$100
Starbucks	10 @ \$10/6 @ \$25
Subway	4 @ \$10
TJ Maxx/Sierra	4 @ \$100
Target	2 @ \$25
Ulta	2 @ \$25
Walgreens	4 @ \$25
Walmart	6 @ \$100

With so many cards still in stock, I am currently only replenishing those purchased on a regular basis. If you need any of the above cards, they can be dropped off at church for pick up. If you want to order any particular cards, please let me know. As always, checks are made payable to St. Paul's.

Karen Radovich <mailto:nuknees@mc.net>

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