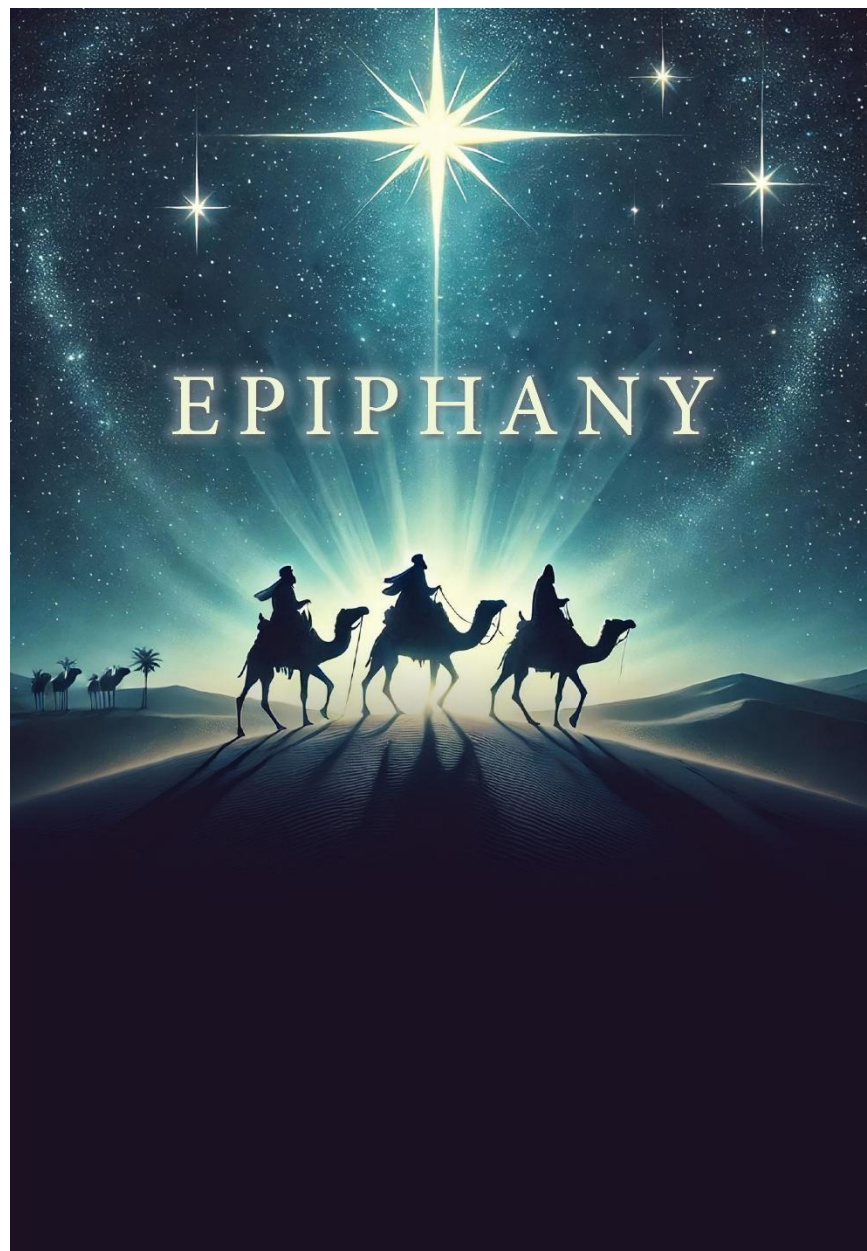


Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

January 5, 2025



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING



*NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON
LIFE'S JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!*

Worship Leadership

Preacher: The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Jane Wentz

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Organist: Sarah A. Myers
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Paula Boyer
Greeters: Rebecca Drazba, Jeff Leister, Steve Roush, Don Dupes, Nancy Richey
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place: Becky Thompson
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Jane Wentz
Counting Team:

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

*Visit the church website, under the 'Sign Up' menu heading,
to help as a Sunday volunteer or Worship Participant.
We're grateful for your generosity.*

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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(717)766-7931

saintpaulsucc-mech.org

Office: stpaulstaff@outlook.com

Rev. John: revjohnwd@outlook.com

Rev. Allyssa: allyssaboyer@outlook.com



ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

EPIPHANY
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

January 5, 2025

The livestream starts with the Announcements. If you'd prefer not to be on camera, kindly choose a seat in the back three pews of the Sanctuary. Leave prayer requests in the bowl in the Common area or give them to the Lead Greeter.

**Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.*

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "We Three Kings"

Lani Smith

SELECTION OF "STAR WORDS"

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 159 "As With Gladness Those of Old"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Guiding God, help us to pay attention to the signs You offer to us, that can point out the path for our next steps, aid in making difficult decisions, and assure us in times of stress. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We have convinced ourselves that after a certain point in our lives, we do not need guidance. We have accepted that our guiding philosophy should be taking care of ourselves first and foremost. We downplay God's teachings that point us towards the priority of caring for others and the whole of creation. We ignore the signs God offers as reminders, leading us toward such words and actions. Let us join in the time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and continues to offer signs and guidance. Whether we pay attention or not, is up to us.

ALL: Let us be open to signs from God. Let us remember what God has sought to teach us, what Jesus tried to teach us, how Jesus showed us how to live, and seek to follow. Amen.

If you are able, please rise and greet one another with signs of Peace.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE GLORIA PATRI (#759 is the tune, but not all the same words)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

*Children are invited to the front at this time.
Everyone who comes forward will be on camera.*

SING THE CHILDREN TO THE FRONT

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world

Shy and Joyful, Bold and Bright

They are precious in his sight

Jesus loves the little children of the world.

THE WORD FOR THE YOUNG

SING THE CHILDREN TO THEIR SEATS

Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so

Little ones to him belong. They are weak but He is strong.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me

Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 60:1-6

THE PSALM READING

Psalms 72:1-7

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

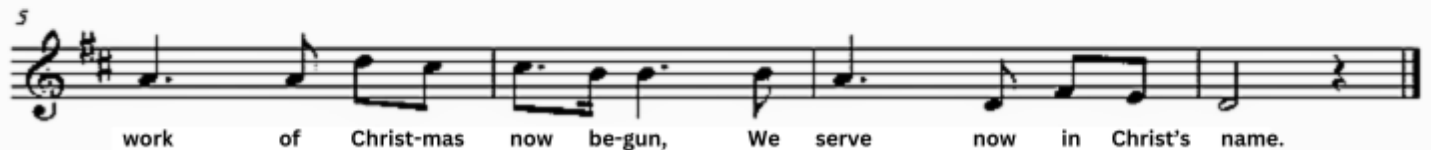
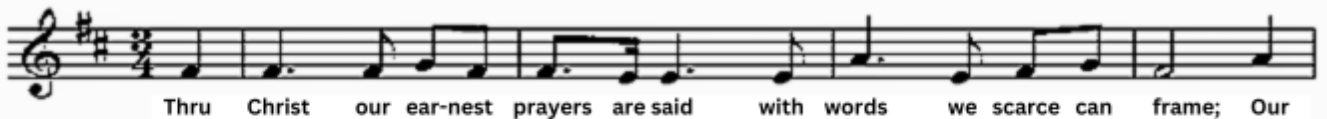
THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Matthew 2:1-18

“What Guides Us?”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)



Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “Seekers of Light”

Martin

Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY

***From all who dwell beneath the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise!
Let the Redeemer's name be sung.
Through every land, by every tongue! Amen.***

*THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

For the joy of giving, we offer the products of our labor for the ministry of this church, in outreach to the world. With concern for those who are poor, oppressed, and needy, we rededicate ourselves as helpers and advocates. Out of devotion to Christ, we commit our best, that the church may bear witness among the principalities and powers of this world. Help us all, O God, to be faithful stewards. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 128 "In the Bleak Midwinter"

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

One: God be with you.
All: And also with you.
One: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them up to God.
One: Let us give thanks to God.
All: It is good to give God thanks and praise.

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS

We gather both in person and in Spirit. For those of you present in the Sanctuary, greeters will pass out bread and gluten-free crackers, and then red wine and white grape juice. They will bring the trays to you. Please hold the elements until all have been served; we will eat and then drink them together. All are welcome to participate. Thank you.

For those of you joining us via livestream, we hope you have some bread and wine or juice of your choice before you. We trust that God is powerful enough to extend God's Blessing upon these Communion elements, even as we and they are scattered in geographic space.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (unison)

Holy God, we give You thanks for the miracle and wonder of this meal. We give You thanks for your coming to us in the person of Jesus, and for Jesus' willingness to offer his whole self for

our benefit. We can see how we can best live our lives. We can believe all “deaths,” those losses, endings, and struggles in this life, and the ones at the end of our physical lives, are not the final word. We can trust that Your Spirit is within all of us, and always will be. May the gifts of this table always remind us of the gifts You have given us all. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 160 “Hark The Herald Angels Sing (Jesus, the Light of the World)

*THE BIDDING TO MISSION

*THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER

One: Lead us, O God.

**All: Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.**

*THE BENEDICTION

* THE THREE-FOLD AMEN

*The livestream ends after the Postlude. You're welcome to converse in the Narthex after the Three-fold Amen.
However, if you choose to stay for the Postlude, please remain silent until the conclusion.*

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “All Things Are Becoming New”

Robert J. Hughes

References:

The Prayer of Dedication is from “Led by Love” by Lavon Bayler, 1996, United Church Press.

The World Peace Prayer is a paraphrase of a verse from the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, also prayed daily by Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns.

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ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Allyssa Boyer, “In honor of Paula Boyer, for her four years of service on Consistory.”

Chalking the Doors

On Epiphany, our children and youth will be chalking the doors and/or sidewalk of our church building. “Chalking the door” is a centuries-old tradition for Christians around the world. It is a way to celebrate and to (literally) mark the occasion of the Epiphany with God’s blessing of our dwelling places with sacred signs and symbols that set our homes and churches apart as places of Christian hospitality, healing, and rest. Each year, Christians use chalk to mark their doors with an inscription of the new year separated by the letters C+M+B. This year, the inscription is 20+C+M+B+25. The C, M, and B stand for the Latin words *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means “May Christ bless this dwelling place.” The letters also stand for the traditional names of the Magi who visited Christ: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. While our kids will be “chalking the doors” of our church building, please feel free to chalk your own doors at home!