

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

February 23, 2025

“But I say to you that listen,

Love

your enemies,

do good

to those who hate you,

bless

those who curse you,

pray

for those who abuse you.”

Luke 6:27-28, NRSV

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: Eric Dundore

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: Steve Stough
Greeters: Corky Short, Melanie Shaver-Durham, Candy LaRue
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place: Shirley Keith Knox, Sherry Spencer
Flower Preparation:
Flower Delivery: Darryl and Winnie Wentz
Counting Team: Sherry Spencer, Karin Stork-Whitson
Fellowship Time: Sue and Dayne Miller

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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 23, 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 "Shall We Gather At the River"

Hugh S. Livingston, Jr.

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 541 "Over My Head"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Loving God, You call on us to love our neighbors as ourselves, and not only them, but our enemies as well. Guide us through the difficulties we have in following these, Your directions to us. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Loving all others is hard. We allow numerous things to stand in our way. But loving our enemies, that is way beyond hard. Those who do us harm or harm others; those who cause great suffering for selfish and greedy reasons; those who demonstrate no concern for those in need or for God's Creation; those who lie or deal in falsehoods to gain favor; those whose words and actions are in direct conflict with Jesus' words and ways; these people we are called to love? We confess we fail and are not sure of our ability to love our enemies. 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 call on us to love our neighbors as ourselves, including our enemies.

ALL: Let us try our best, and keep trying, because love is what will change our relationships for the better, not hate. 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 EPISTLE READING

1 Corinthians 15:35-38

THE PSALM READING

Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40

*THE HYMN No. 409 "Give Me Jesus"

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Luke 6:27-38

"Love Your Enemies. Jesus Really Said That"

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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.

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

Hear our prayer, O Lord, Hear our prayer, O Lord. In -
cline Thine ear to us And grant us Thy peace.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY "Walk Through the Valley"

Spiritual, arr. Thygerson

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)

Receive our joy, O God, along with our gifts. We reach out with this offering to do good in and through our church. May any who have harmed others be helped. Heal us of unjust anger, jealousy, and strife. Through our shared life in this community of faith, create in us the image of one who dwells in heaven. Let us share with the whole world the blessings we receive from Your hand. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 593 "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

*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 "Toccata Brève"

Tom Birchwood

References:

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler, 1997, 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
Wendi Taylor, "To celebrate the birth of my first great-grandchild."
Wendi Taylor, "To honor my daughters and grandchildren."

Spiritual Royalties Initiative Congregational Pledge

We, the Congregation of St. Paul's UCC, Mechanicsburg, acknowledge the history and significance of the Negro Spirituals sung in worship today:

*Shall We Gather At the River
Over My Head
Give Me Jesus
Walk Through the Valley*

We affirm their artistic and spiritual worth in the life of the world today. With great respect and deep gratitude for the tremendous musical contributions made to American music by Black people, we offer our thanks and praise to God for the creators of the Negro Spiritual and their descendants.

We pledge that each time we sing Negro Spirituals in our worship we will sing them with holy reverence and open hearts.

Through our prayers, we will honor the unnamed enslaved people who composed them, and we will pay royalties from the funds collected to the Capital Area Music Association and Sankofa Theater Company*, both organizations dedicated to promoting the advancement of young Black artists and musicians, and to preserve Negro Spirituals in the Black community.

We understand that the debt owed to Black musicians and artists can never be fully repaid. Through our prayers, our gifts, and our actions, we will keep striving to end systemic racism in America.

*www.camamusic.org and www.sankofatheatrehbg.com