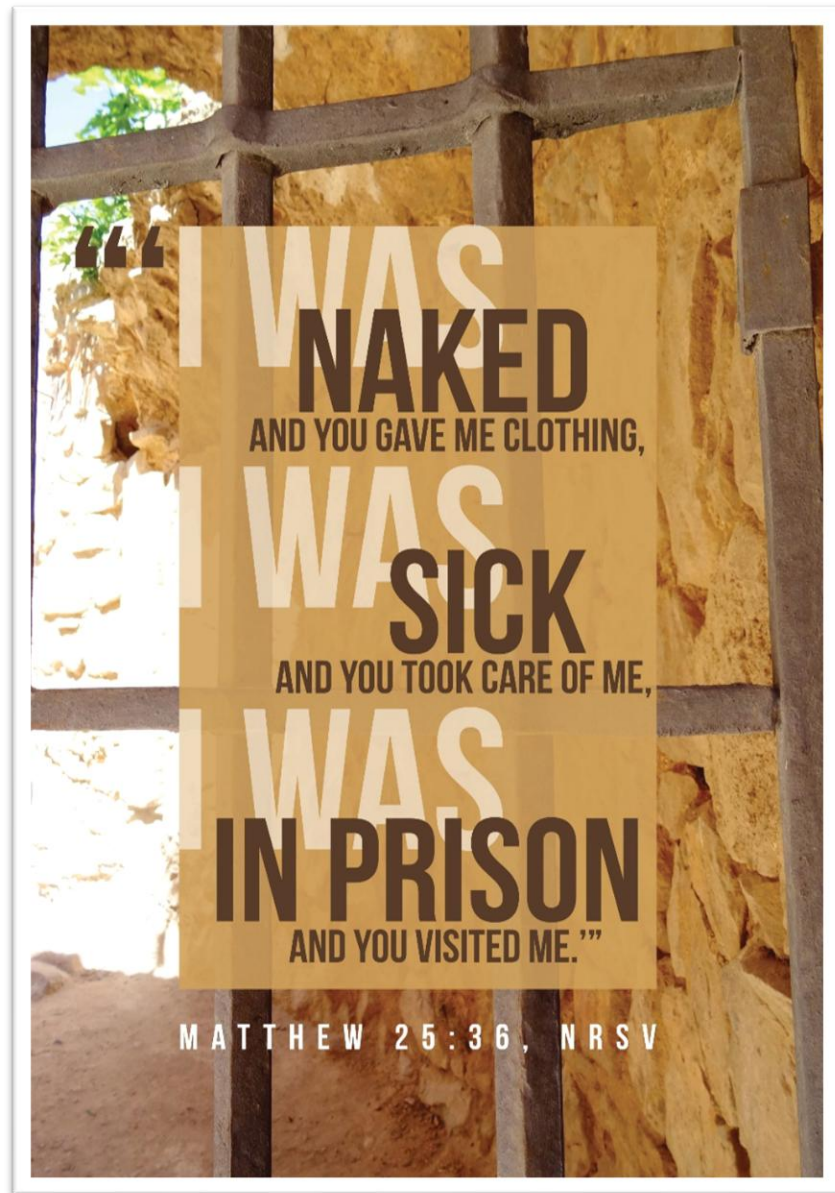


Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

October 19, 2025



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

9

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

Worship Leadership

The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio

The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer

Lector: Teri Guelcher

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: Crystal Cline

Greeters: Susan Miller, Becky Thompson, Sherry Spencer

Acolyte:

Kids' Place: Jonneke Dundore, Barbara Wheeler-Bride

Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel

Flower Delivery: Teri Guelcher

Counting Team: Sherry Spencer

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.

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**ONLINE
GIVING**



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

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
CHILDREN'S SABBATH

October 19, 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

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "Air From 'Saul'"

George F. Handel

CALL TO WORSHIP a poem by Mosab Abu Toha

"What a Gazan Mother Does During an Israeli Night Air Strike"

She gathers all her kids around / in her bed, as one collects and packs / books and clothes before leaving a hotel. / She counts her kids' ears, mouths, noses, then / looks into their eyes. And, I swear, she smiles. / She sings a night song to bury in the ground the sound of bombs, / to disappear the whirring of drones back into the clouds. / / She hugs each child, still here, / after every bomb and, / if she knows a bomb is about to light up the sky and the room, / she covers her kids' eyes and / loudly asks, / *What can you see when your eyes are closed?* / hoping her trembling voice may hide / the bomb's eradicating sound.

*THE HYMN "A Voice Was Heard in Ramah" (to the tune of no. 245, "The Day of Resurrection")

***A voice was heard in Ramah that could not be consoled,
As Rachel wept for children she could no longer hold.
For Herod ruled the nation, yet feared the Infant King.
How great the devastation that fear and anger bring!***

***O God, we hear the crying for little ones of yours;
For many still are dying in conflicts and in wars —
In every troubled nation, on every violent street,
How great the lamentation when fear and anger meet!***

***Whenever one is weeping, the whole world suffers, too.
Yet, Jesus, as we serve them, we're also serving you.
So may we not ignore them, nor turn our eyes away,
But help us labor for them to bring a better day.***

***O Prince of Peace, you lead us in ways of truth and grace.
May we be brave to practice your peace in every place —
To love each fear-filled nation, to serve each troubled street.
How great the celebration when peace and justice meet!***

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***PRAYER OF INVOCATION** (unison)

We gather to worship, O God, under the shadow of an empty cross: a sign of the cost of human suffering, and of the promise of a time when all suffering will end. Like Jesus, we seek to follow faithfully in your way. We seek to care for the children of the world, near and far, for we know they are all your children, and all our children too. Open us to your presence, that our hearts may be softened and our spirits moved to work for justice, peace, and healing. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

In every age, prophets and apostles have come to call the people of God to repentance and newness of life. We too are called to admit our sin, and to commit ourselves anew to follow in God's way. We confess that we have sinned against God in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved God with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. God promises us grace and pardon when we acknowledge our weakness and shame. Let us join in silent prayers of confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: Take heart; God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life. Our sins are forgiven.

ALL: **Let us forgive one another, and give ourselves to one another, that all people may live lives of peace, plenty, healing, and hope. 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.***

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS (unison)

May God's grace be upon these shawls...warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May these mantles be safe havens...sacred places of security and well-being...sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the ones who receive these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!

*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

Jeremiah 31:15-17

THE READING OF THE PSALM

Psalms 10

*THE HYMN “Now There Is War” (to the tune of no. 362, “Though I May Speak”)

Now there is war and children die,

but theirs is not the battle cry.

This is their time to live and grow —

to think of things the young should know.

This is their time to open doors —

to read new books, to do their chores,

to make new friends, to share their bread.

The world gives pain and death instead.

This is their time for soccer teams,

for watching clouds, for dreaming dreams.

They long for peace; they're told to, "Wait!"

They long for love; they're taught to hate.

O God, your reign belongs to these

who make up songs and skin their knees.

May we seek peace and daily strive

to build a world where they may thrive.

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THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE GOSPEL READING

Matthew 25:31-40

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)

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

The musical score is written for a unison choral response. It consists of two systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing. Lord, send your Spir-it in this place;" and "Lord, lis-ten to your chil-dren pray-ing, send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace." The music features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass line and a more melodic line in the treble.

Text: Ken Medema, b. 1943
 Music: Ken Medema, b. 1943
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CHILDREN PRAYING
 irregular

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY "Tell the Story of Jesus"

Larson

Choristers and Youth Choirs

*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)

Holy God, You revealed Yourself in Jesus, a baby born to a Jewish Palestinian family. In Jesus, You embodied care for the hungry, the suffering, the displaced, and the outcast. May Your blessing be upon these gifts returned to You. Use this offering, we pray, to bless the children of our world — all the children — that they may know safety, peace, justice, freedom, and the fullness of life. Amen.

*THE HYMN “We Weep for Gaza’s Children” (to the tune of no. 386, “The Church’s One Foundation.”)

***We weep for Gaza's children, for in the midst of strife,
they're suffering starvation; they barely cling to life.
We grieve that as a nation, when children cry for bread,
We don't give food to bless them; we give them death instead.***

***O God, we can't imagine a parent's pain and grief
When hungry, bone-thin children cry out for some relief.
Yet violence halts the sharing of food that people need.
This weapon of starvation — we're seeing it succeed.***

***We hear the children's questions — their trauma and their pain:
"When will this war be ending?" "Can we go home again?"
"Will we die fast or slowly when bombs fall from above?"
"Will there be bread here for me and for the ones I love?"***

***We grieve the awful violence — the awful hunger, too.
But then we sit in silence — we don't know what to do.
God, give us great persistence to speak and advocate.
For you're the God of justice, and justice cannot wait.***

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*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.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “Festive Recessional”

Edward Broughton

References:

The Call to Worship is the poem “What a Gazan Mother Does During an Israeli Night Air Strike” by Mosab Abu Toha, *Forest of Noise: Poems*, Knopf: New York, NY, 2024. Mosab Abu Toha is a Palestinian poet, short story writer, and essayist from Gaza. He is also the founder of the Edward Said Library, Gaza’s first English-language library, which he hopes to rebuild. In November 2023, while trying to flee to Egypt with his wife and children, he was arrested by the Israeli army, imprisoned, and beaten, before being released.

The Prayer of Invocation, Call to Confession, and Words of Assurance are adapted from “The United Church of Christ Book of Worship,” United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership: New York, NY, 1986.

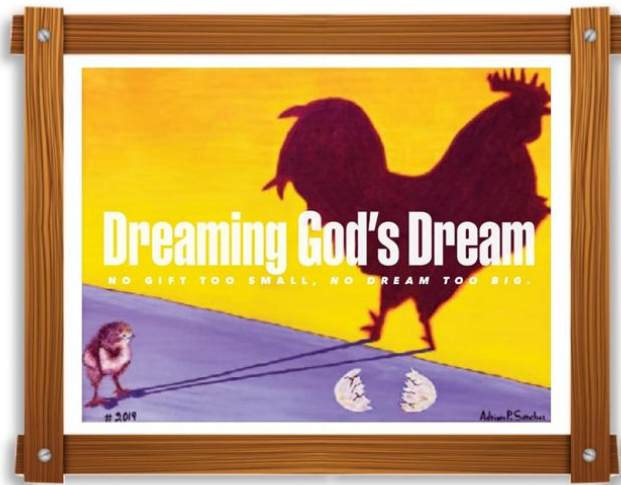
The Prayer of Blessing is by Janet Bristow, 2008, www.shawlministry.com.

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
Betsy Rushong, “In honor of Russell and Mandy”



Feeding the 5000

CAN ONE SMALL GIFT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE AT ALL?

All the Gospels tell the story of Jesus feeding 5000 people (John 6: 1-14) with only five loaves and two fish. But the Gospel of John focuses our attention on the role of a little boy. Faced with a crowd of hungry people, Jesus looked for help feeding them. The little boy stepped forward with a modest gift, improbably small when set against the size of the crowd.

Jesus blessed the small gift and distributed it to the crowd. As Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade observes, “Like the folk story of Stone Soup where travelers ask for a large kettle and a stone as a starter for the community stew, we might imagine Jesus calling for a basket to pass

around the food. It may have looked comical to see such a tiny amount of food in such a large basket. But then something interesting happened. As he passed the basket to his disciples, suddenly more baskets appeared. Surprisingly, there was food in those baskets as well!”

We dream big in church. The Gospel moves us to imagine addressing poverty, stopping conflicts, reconciling enemies, and building the kingdom of God. Our gifts may seem small next to the big dreams of our congregation. But like the Feeding of the 5000, God’s amazing work begins with our small gifts.

What might God do with what you have to offer?