

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

January 4, 2026



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: Steven Stough

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: Mark Dundore
Greeters: Steven Stough
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Becky Thompson, Dale Thorpe
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Dale Thorpe, Don Dupes
Counting Team: Paula Boyer

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

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

January 4, 2026

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

CHORAL INTROIT

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

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of all people, guide us in listening to how people of other faiths, how outcasts in societies, how those who are often looked down upon, often sense Your Presence when we miss it. Help us to pay close attention to what these folks have learned and are sharing with us. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We often choose to stick to our own "tribe," those people who look like us, act like us, live near us. This can make us feel safer, more secure, and less troubled by questions of who we should listen to. Yet we know, as emphasized in Jesus' birth stories, that outsiders, outcasts, and the poor are who God spoke to, sang to, gave signs to, and still does. Let us join in the time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and keeps coming to various people, often catching us by surprise.

ALL: **Let us recognize that we can be guided by those we perceive as "other," as God continues to speak to us, teach us, through many sources. God's Love is for all, and potentially comes through all. 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, 12-14

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Matthew 2:1-12

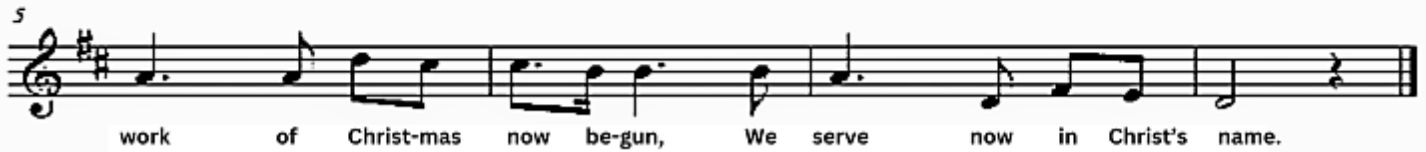
“Who Notices God’s Arrival?”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)



Thru Christ our ear-nest prayers are said with words we scarce can frame; Our



work of Christ-mas now be-gun, We serve now in Christ's name.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “What Star Is This, with Beams So Bright?”
Chancel Choir

Helvey

*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)

How good you have been to us, wondrous God! Our lives are like a watered garden when we are responsive to Your will for us. You turn mourning into joy and give gladness for sorrow. We are radiant with thankfulness when we remember the glory of Your Word made flesh. In response to your grace, we dedicate this offering to extend Your reign among us. May we be part of Your plan for the fullness of time. 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 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.

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 (all the bread is gluten-free), 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"

*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

References:

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Taught 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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