

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 14, 2025



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

,

*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
Preacher: The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Pam Smith

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: Charles Ricedorf-Reed
Greeters: Becky Thompson, Don Dupes, Paula Boyer
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Erin and Caroline Anderson, Jonneke Dundore, Deborah Cashman
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Becky Thompson
Counting Team:
Candle Lighting: Nancy, Dan and Tom Richey

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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**ONLINE
GIVING**



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

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 14, 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 "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming"

John M. Rasley

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 117 "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE – JOY (responsive)

One: In the midst of our waiting and longing for God to repair the world, we celebrate that Good News is coming! We rejoice that the One who brings healing is on the way; he will lift up the lowly, he will feed the hungry, he will come to the aid of those in trouble, and he will enfold all people in his mercy.

All: **With gladness, we join our voices with the prophet Isaiah, who proclaims that God changes everything: waters the deserts, strengthens the weak, transforms our values, and invites us to live flourishing lives.**

One: We light this candle of joy as a sign of God's joyful spirit which enlivens us as we wait and work for the day when all creation will flourish together.

SUNG RESPONSE

***The candle of joy reminds us to sing,
For God is at work to do a new thing.
The proud will be humbled; the lowly will rise.
God's kingdom is one of delight and surprise.***

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Mighty One, we rejoice that You strengthen us and watch over us. You open our eyes and unstop our ears. You meet our hungers with good things. You disturb our false pride while helping us discover our true strength. We have gathered to worship You. Awaken the deep joy in us that comes when we recognize Your presence, when we know You are with us. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

To all whose lives seem like a desert wasteland, God invites: Come to the living waters. To all who feel they are wrestling with lions, God offers a refuge. The Holy One, who is standing before us,

awaits our confession with compassion and the promise of healing. Let us join in silent prayers of confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God speaks to our fearful hearts: Be strong. Do not fear. I will come to save you, which is just another way of saying I will bind up your wounds; I will heal your brokenness.

ALL: **We rejoice in the Lord always. Again, we say, rejoice! God is present with us, and God's love is everlasting.**

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

Isaiah 35:1-10

THE READING OF THE PSALM

Psalms 146:5-10

*THE HYMN No. 119 "My Soul Gives Glory to My God"

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: Thanks be to God!

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Luke 1:46-55

“Defiant Joy”

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)

Advent Blessing

Bless us, Fa - ther, as we pray. Help us seek You day by day. Bind us all in
Heart and mind. Bid all our quar - rels cease. Fill the world with Hea - ven's peace. Bid all war and
hun - ger cease. Oh, come, Ho - ly Sav - ior, come.

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “Advent Joy”

arr. Childers

Hand Chimes

*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)

Generous God, thank You for inviting us to share the blessings You pour out on us. We want to extend the healing ministry of Jesus who gave both sight and insight. Use our resources to heal attitudes as well as bodies, to bring wholeness, not just cures. Help us to address the inequities of the earth that leave so many without food or shelter or hope. Lead us into Your realm in the midst of our daily living. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 104 “We Hail You God’s Anointed”

***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 "Lift Up Your Heads, O Mighty Gates"

Franklin Ritter

References:

The Advent Candle Lighting liturgy is adapted from Discipleship Ministries, an agency of The United Methodist Church, © 2025 (all rights reserved), and "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler, United Church Press: Cleveland, OH, 1998. The Prayer of Invocation, Call to Confession, Words of Assurance, and Prayer of Dedication are adapted from "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler, United Church Press: Cleveland, OH, 1998. 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. Songs, music, and lyrics used by permission. CCLI License #11380019 CSPL128945

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Susan Stump, "In memory of Raymond Kline"

CHRISTMAS CANTATA

You won't want to miss this year's Cantata, next Sunday, December 21st. at 10:30AM. Our Choirs and musicians have been faithfully preparing for a meaningful morning. Please plan on joining us and invite someone too.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear! Everyone—children, youth, and adults—are all invited to go Christmas caroling! We will leave St. Paul's at 2:00 PM sharp on Saturday, December 20, and drive to the homes of some of our congregation's seniors to sing carols. Bring comfortable shoes, warm clothes, and a joyful spirit. We plan to return to the church building around 5:30 PM. People of all ages are invited to participate, but please sign up so that we can arrange transportation for everyone Children in 5th grade or younger must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. If you are willing to volunteer as a driver, please let us know when you sign up.