

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

December 21, 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: Anna Thompson

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Eric R. Dundore

Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore

Organist: Sarah A. Myers

Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Cantata Musicians

Sarah Myers, piano

Maddie Felix, synthesizer

Ruth Sweigart, string keyboard

Kevin Neidig, guitar

Drew Jackson, bass

Jim Weaver, drums

Alison, Andy, and Mitchel Williams, percussion

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Daniella Benfer

Greeters: Anna Thompson, Sherry Spencer, Paula Boyer

Acolyte:

Kids' Place: Rachael Hersch, Sue Ward-Diorio

Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel

Flower Delivery: Chris Grice

Counting Team:

Candle Lighting: Mel and Mitch Shaver-Durham

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
CANTATA: PEACE

December 21, 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 "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

Dorothy Wells

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 144 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

THE LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE—PEACE (Responsive)

One: You may be seated (give the congregation a moment to sit down). Advent reminds us that we are people who share a story, the story of Jesus, who enacts peace by judging in favor of the poor and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth. We long for the day when "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them."

All: Today, we choose to live the story of peace, believing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God's creation.

One: We light this candle of peace as a sign of our commitment to bring Light to the places the world seeks to hide until that day when all creation lives together in harmony and abundance.

SUNG RESPONSE

***The candle of peace shines bright with God's plan;
The wolf will lie down and dwell with the lamb.
Our guns and our weapons, our hatred and war,
Will give way to gardens that heal and restore.***

WORD FOR THE YOUNG

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of Love, You come to us in the person of Jesus so all might learn how to live in the Peace You seek for all people and all of creation. Guide us in finding and sharing Your Peace. Help us to receive Jesus again this year to help us in our quest. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

While we long for peace, we often create conflict with others and within ourselves. Our self-interest and greed move us to see others as competition and even enemies. Hurt and abuse we have suffered in the past causes us to act in unhealthy ways towards others and ourselves. Peace escapes us. Let us join in the time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us, and seeks to teach us, remind us, encourage us to pursue the peace that passes all understanding.

ALL: Let us recognize God's call to us and choose to act in the ways that bring about peace for 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.

PEACE!

A Christmas Celebration

Music composed and arranged by Joel Raney

David Payne, narrator

No. 1 – A Prayer for Peace

Instrumental

No. 2 – Let Us Adore Him

Let There Be Peace on Earth and O Come, All Ye Faithful

Choir

No. 3 – Bring Us Heavenly Peace

Bring Us Hope and Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Choir and Deb Hall, soloist

No. 4 – In Peaceful Bethlehem

Once in Royal David's City, Gentle Mary Laid Her Child, and Away in a Manger

Choir

No. 5 – Peaceful Rejoicing

Bring a Torch, O Worship the King, and Angels We Have Heard on High

Choir

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



THE OFFERTORY "The Snow Lay on the Ground"

Robert J. Hughes

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

*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)

Loving God, we would not weary You with empty words or with routine tips of obligation. You have granted us life with such abundant possibilities that we can never do enough to express our gratitude. You have honored us by calling us saints and apostles. Therefore, we offer ourselves and our abundance in the confidence that You will continue to provide for us in whatever circumstances we face. Use us as ministers of Your grace. Amen.

PEACE! (cont.)

No. 6 – Carry Me to Bethlehem
Calypso Carol and O Little Town of Bethlehem
Choir

No. 7 – Still Was the Night
Still, Still, Still
Choir

No. 8 – Peace on Earth
Let There Be Peace on Earth and Put Peace into Each Other's Hands
Choir

No. 9 – Let Us Adore Him
O Come, All Ye Faithful

Choir

*THE HYMN No. 132 “Joy the 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.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

James Denton

References:

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
David Stump, “In memory of Caroline Erney.”
Candy LaRue, “In honor of Corky Short’s birthday.”

Please join us for the rest of our Advent and Christmas celebrations:

THE CHRISTMAS FUND

Today we are collecting the Christmas Fund Offering. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas “Thank You” gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees. Checks can be made to St. Paul’s and placed in the giving plate.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

Wednesday, December 24th, 4:00 PM: Family oriented Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 24th, 11:00 PM: Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols

CHRISTMAS CAROL AND HYMN SING

Sunday, December 28th, 10:30 AM.