

Welcome to  
**St. Paul's United Church of Christ**

*An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

December 24, 2025; 4PM



**CHRISTMAS  
EVE**

**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  
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer

**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: Becky Thompson  
Greeters: Candy LaRue, Corky Short, Jordan Young, Barbara Wheeler-Bride  
Acolyte:  
Candle Lighting: The Thompson Family  
Readers: Rachael Hersh, Mary Boyer, Shirley Keith Knox

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

CHRISTMAS EVE

December 24, 2025; 4PM

*\*Those who are comfortable doing so are invited to stand.*

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Lucy Ann Warriner

\*THE PROCESSIONAL CAROL "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

**O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,  
O come, ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels.**

**Refrain**

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!**

**Sing choirs of angels, sing in exultation;**

**O sing all ye citizens of heaven above!**

**Glory to God, all glory in the highest. Refrain**

THE LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLES

*Light The Pink And Purple Candles*

One: Ready or not, Christmas is here. We have sought to practice the Discipline of Hope, the Love of All People and All of Creation; Defiant Joy; and the Peace that fills our hearts and spirits. We have sought to prepare ourselves for God's next mystery.

One: Jesus is about to be born, again in our lives and the lives of all people!

**All: Shall we welcome God's coming? Shall we seek to follow God's way rather than our own?**

*Light The Christ Candle*

One: Our Advent Candles are all lit: now tonight we light the central candle, reminding us that Jesus came to shed light in a world where many were and are afraid, lonely, and uncertain.

**All: We are reminded too, that Christ is the center of our lives, the shining beacon of hope, love, joy and peace for all. Praise God!**

**One/All: Let us pray. O Holy God, thank You that the light of Christ shines so very clearly tonight. Guide us in welcoming You and Your Way. May our joy be full and our hearts rejoice for the world shall never be the same again. Truth, justice, wholeness, and love have once again been set free amongst us. Thank you, God, for this Holy Night of nights! Amen.**

SUNG RESPONSE “The Christ Candle’s Light” (sung to no. 305, “O Worship the King, All Glorious Above”)

***The Christ candle's light that shines for us here  
Tells out the good news that God has come near!  
God came, a poor baby, in one time and place,  
To show all creation the wealth of God's grace.***

\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

**Glorious, giving God, You gifted us with Your son Jesus. You trusted us with Your Child. You continue to trust and bless us. Thank you. May our gift to You be our love and service to others, especially those most vulnerable of Your Children. Amen.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

God cannot stand to be separated from us. God comes to us in many ways, over and over again. We confess that because we allow our minds and hearts to be elsewhere, we often miss or refuse the gifts of God’s presence, wisdom and guidance. Let us join in the silent Prayer of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and brings Christmas no matter what.

**ALL: Let us accept the gift of God’s presence; be transformed by God’s Spirit; and share with the world God’s vision for hope, peace, joy, and God’s all-embracing, all-encompassing love. Amen.**

*If you are able, please rise and greet one another with signs of Peace.*

\*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

THE FIRST LESSON Luke 2:1-7

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “What Child Is This, Who Laid to Rest”

***What child is this, who, laid to rest, On Mary’s lap is sleeping?  
whom angels greet with anthems sweet, While shepherds watch are keeping?***

***Refrain: This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Haste, haste to bring him laud, The babe, the son of Mary.***

***Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?***

***Good Christian, fear: for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Refrain***

ANTHEM “Christmas Bells”

Page and Shafferman

The Choristers

THE SECOND LESSON Luke 2:8-14

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “Angels We Have Heard On High”  
*Angels we have heard on high Sweetly singing o’er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.*

*Refrain: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.*

*Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come, adore on bended knee Christ, the Lord, the newborn King. Refrain*

THE THIRD LESSON Luke 2:15-20

WORD FOR THE YOUNG

THE OFFERTORY “To Us Emmanuel”

Horman

Youth 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)

**We rejoice before You, O God, as with joy at the harvest. Your gifts to us are too numerous to count. Your grace in Christ offers wholeness and meaning for our lives. We count it a privilege to give in joyous response. We would be generous in our support of Christ’s body on earth and all the redeeming work the church seeks to do. Grant that we may be faithful in praising you for all we have seen and heard, and in working for peace and justice in your world. Amen.**

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

*O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.*

*How silently, how silently, The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of his heav’n  
No ear may hear his coming, But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him, still The dear Christ enters in.*

CHRISTMAS CREED FROM LATIN AMERICA

**I believe in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Gospel which began in Bethlehem.  
I believe in the One whose spirit glorified a small village,  
of whose coming the shepherds saw the sign,  
and for whom there was no room in the inn.  
I believe in the One whose life changed the course of history,**

for whom the kings of the earth had no power,  
and who was not understood by the proud.

I believe in the One to whom the poor, the oppressed, the discouraged,  
the afflicted, the sick, the blind and the leprous gave welcome  
and accepted as Savior.

I believe in the One who, with love, changed the hearts of the proud,  
and with his life, showed that it is more important to serve than to be served,  
and that the greatest joy is in giving your life for others.

I believe in peace, which means justice among all peoples and nations  
and love among all.

I believe in reconciliation, forgiveness and the transforming power of the Gospel.

I believe that Christmas is strength and power, and that this world can change  
if, with humility and faith, we kneel before the manger.

I believe that I must be the first one to do so. Amen.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "Joy To the World"

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come: Let earth receive her King;  
Let every heart prepare him room, And heaven and nature sing,  
And heaven and nature sing, And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns: Let men their songs employ;  
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains Repeat the sounding joy,  
Repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace, And makes the nations prove  
The glories of his righteousness, And wonders of his love, And wonders of his love, And  
wonder, wonders of his love.*

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD John 1:1-18

\*THE PASSING OF THE LIGHT

The ushers will light the candle of the worshipper nearest the aisle. Candles should be secure before lighting. Dip only the unlit candle when lighting your candle from your neighbor's. Please help younger children. Always hold your candle in an upright position and maintain a safe distance between the candle and yourself and other people and things. Keep your candle lit until the conclusion of the service. As you leave the Sanctuary, please place the candle and holder in the receptacle in the Narthex. Thank you. Let us now sing.

\*THE CONGREGATIONAL CAROL "Silent Night"

*Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and child, Holy infant so tender and mild  
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.*

***Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight,  
Glories stream from heaven a far, heav'nly host sing alleluia;  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!***

***Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light  
Radiant beams from thy holy face, With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.***

\*THE BENEDICTION

\* POSTLUDE "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

Steven Scott

References:

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2" by Lavon Bayler, 1992, United Church Press. A Christmas Creed from Latin America was shared by the Rev. Quinn Caldwell in a Still Speaking Devotion 1/2/2012.

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## **Poinsettia Dedications**

**Daniella and Joshua Benfer:** In memory of John Rosbrugh - first American chaplain killed - 1777.

**The Bensel Family:** In memory of Cindy Bensel.

**Herb and Melba Bomberger:** In memory of loved ones.

**Chris and Tina Bowers:** In memory of David Francis LaPierre, Anne Paris Davison, and Robin Lynn Rupp.

**Paula and Mark Boyer:** In memory of our parents: Mayme & Jim Alfano, Nadine & Carroll Boyer.

**Bill Cashman's wife and Daughters:** In memory of Bill Cashman.

**The Davinroy Family:** In honor of friends; In memory of family.

**Jonneke and Eric Dundore:** In honor of our granddaughter, Aleida; In memory of our parents.

**Diane Freeman:** In memory of Danielle Freeman.

**Sharon's Family (Herrold) - Tom, Steve, & Laura:** In loving memory of Sharon Herrold.

**Martha Keith:** In memory of Gene Keith.

**Jean and Craig (Layne):** In memory of John Layne.

**Terry McGarry and Deb Vanderling:** In memory of Joanne & Robert McGarry, Ken & Shirley Rowe.

**Tom and Betty Olsen:** In memory of parents.

**Julie Patton and Family:** In memory of Fred and Ruth Thornton.

**Betsy Rushong:** In honor of the birth of the Christ child and the love shared especially this season.

**The Scott Family:** In honor of Rebecca Scott, Julie, Rowdy, and Walker Lantis; In memory of Barbara Bell, Dorothy and John Scott.

**Pam and Dwight Smith:** In memory of our parents.

**David Stump:** In memory of Bill Stump and Caroline Erney.

**Susan Stump:** In memory of Bob Myers and Raymond and Margaret Kline.

**Wendi Taylor:** With Joy and Hope.

**Anna Thompson:** In honor of children and grandchildren; In honor of parents and grandparents.

**Becky Thompson and Family:** In memory of Margo Thompson and our beloved grandparents.

**Sue and John Ward-Diorio:** In memory of Evelyn, John & Jackie Diorio, Judy Ward & Kelly McCarthy.

**Jeff and Randy Whitman:** In memory of our parents.

**Don and Merikay Wood:** In memory of Helen (Date) Wood and Mary Kanour.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Join us on Sunday, December 28, 2025, at 10:30AM for our Christmas Carol and Hymn Service.

### **STAYING CONNECTED**

If you're interested in receiving email updates from St. Paul's head to <http://eepurl.com/hRK0gX> and subscribe.

**There will be no Sunday school on Sunday, December 28th.** Sunday school classes will resume on January 4, 2025. Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

### **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.

### **A JOURNEY TOWARDS ANTI-RACISM: PART 2**

Thursday, January 8, 6:00-8:00 PM — Guest speaker Laine Whitaker, MSL, is returning to St. Paul's to lead a workshop about the multifaceted nature of bias and racism. In a world where systemic inequities persist, fostering an inclusive environment requires intentional effort and continuous learning. This session will be beneficial if you did or didn't attend Laine's first session in July. Reading "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo prior to this session will enhance your workshop experience, but it is not a requirement. While there is no cost to attend this training, a free will offering will be collected to compensate Laine for her time and talent. We hope you'll join us for this learning opportunity!