

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

January 11, 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: Paula 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: Jeff Leister
Greeters: Don Dupes, Crystal Cline
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Sherry Spencer, Jonneke Dundore, Susan Miller
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Becky Thompson
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.*

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

BAPTISM OF CHRIST

January 11, 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 "Theme From Sonata No. 6"

Mozart arr. Trenton Watkins

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN "Down By the Jordan" (to the tune of No. 22, "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty")

***Down by the Jordan, a prophet named John was baptizing,
Preaching a message the people found bold and surprising:
"God will forgive! Show that you'll change how you live!
Surely God's new day is rising!"***

***There by the river, the crowd came with great expectation:
"Are you God's Chosen One, sent here to rescue our nation?"
"No!" John replied. "He who is mightier than I
Judges and offers salvation."***

***Jesus, you went to be baptized along with the others,
Taking your place among sinners, God's lost sons and daughters.
Then with great love, God's Spirit came as a dove!
Your work began in those waters.***

***Here in the Church, we are baptized and filled with God's Spirit.
Freed and forgiven, we're welcomed with joy! Can you hear it?
This is God's sign! This is how God says, "You're mine!"
Let's take the good news and share it!***

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*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Creator God, guide us in remembering the primal place water holds. It has existed since before the beginning of time. Through Baptism we are reminded of our connection with all of Creation and Your never-ending Love of each of us. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We often view ourselves as apart: separate from other people, separate from Creation, separate even from God. Sometimes this disconnect, in our arrogance, leads us to believe we have power over everyone and everything. Sometimes this disconnect, in our sorrow and struggles, leads us to believe we are left on our own to fend for ourselves. Neither of these realities are correct or healthy. 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 remind us of our deep connection with all that is.

ALL: May we remember we are all Beloved, all Creation is Beloved and deserves to be treated as such. 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

All are invited to come forward and receive a Cowrie shell (or Puka shell as they are known in Hawaii). The water will be blessed by our prayers. As you are given a shell by either Rev. Allyssa or Rev. John, each of us will also be reminded that we are a Beloved Child of God. We encourage you to take your shell home and place it in a location you can see. By looking upon the shell each day, we will be reminded of our Belovedness. Everyone is invited to come forward, whether you remember your Baptism or not, whether you have been Baptized or not. Baptism is the recognition of that which is already true and true for all: We are Beloved Children of God.

If you are uncomfortable coming forward, please let one of the Greeters know and one of our Pastors will come to you.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 1:1-10

THE PSALM READING

Psalm 29

*THE HYMN No. 44 "Beautiful Jesus"

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

Matthew 3:13-17

“Water + Baptism = Deep Connection”

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)

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 “My Shepherd’s Amazing Grace”
Hand Chimes

Dennis

*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)

Your abundant outpouring to us, O God, has included many things we have come to enjoy and take for granted. Some of these things have become for us graven images that occupy our time and attention. In this offering we are recalled to matters of first importance, and we give ourselves and our substance to them. May all that we dedicate here, including life itself, accomplish much good and bring healing to our troubled world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*THE HYMN “Creator Of the Water” (to the tune of No. 245, “The Day of Resurrection”)

***Creator of the water that makes the world so green,
That satisfies the thirsty, and keeps us cool and clean,
We take from your creation this gift we use each day;***

You call us now to use it in this most holy way.

***As in the time of Noah, the sea engulfed the land,
And through the Red Sea, Moses led Israel 'cross the sand,
And to the Jordan waters, Christ went and was baptized —
Your water has a power: it changes all our lives.***

***May this your gift of water, long springing from the earth,
Become for all new Christians their fountain of rebirth.
Lord, wash away their sinning, and give them life anew —
Pour out your Spirit on them, that they may follow you.***

***God, through your gift of water, your family we become;
You take away divisions; in Christ you make us one.
Now send your Spirit on us and give us work to do
That we may share with others the love we have from you.***

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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.
However, if you choose to stay for the Postlude, please remain silent until the conclusion.*

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE “March in D”

G.F. Handel arr. Rick Parks

References:

Cover Image, Scott, Lorenzo. Baptism of Jesus, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=56877> [retrieved January 6, 2026]. Original source: <https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/baptism-jesus-33953>.

The Prayer of Dedication is from “Fresh Winds of the Spirit” 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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ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Pam Smith, “In memory of our parents.”