

Welcome to St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

March 1, 2026



Nicodemus said to him,
"How can these things be?"

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: Shirley Keith Knox

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: Dave Scott
Greeters: Nancy Richey, Wendy Hayden
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Becky Thompson
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Shirley Keith Knox
Counting Team:

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 IN LENT

March 1, 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 "Arioso"

George Frederick Handel

CHORAL INTROIT

*THE HYMN No. 573 "Lead On Eternal Sovereign"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Let the winds of the Spirit blow in our midst today, loving God. Let us hear the sound and feel the power. Open our hearts in new ways to the promise of Your healing grace so we may be a blessing to one another and to Your world. We need courage to face the challenges and struggles of life. We seek reassurance that You will be with us in our going out and our coming in. Strengthen our faith to withstand the trials and temptations that lead us away from a faithful journey with Christ. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Spiritual ancestors, like Abraham, sensed God's call to leave behind the security of the familiar to venture forward to new places God would show them. Others, like Nicodemus, were astonished by Jesus' call to rebirth in the Spirit. Reminded that both calls come to us also, and confident of God's love for us, let us look at our lives with honesty, and offer silent prayers of confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and freed.

ALL: We receive, with humility and joy, the rebirth God offers this day, and all our days. 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.

THE CHORISTERS “A Prayer for Peace”

Page and Shafferman

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 12:1-4a

THE READING OF THE PSALM

Psalm 121

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE GOSPEL READING & MESSAGE:

John 3:1-17

“Message Title”

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)

Em C⁶ D G C Am⁶ B

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call an - swer me. O

Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me.

fine

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “For God So Loved the World”

Grotenhuis

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)

Thank you, God, for glimpses of eternity in the daily experiences of life. We are grateful for encounters that lift the horizons of our vision. We rejoice in the teaching and care you have

provided for us. Bless now the gifts we return to You for the service of the church. We rejoice together in the healing and renewing ministry of Jesus that inspires us to give our best. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 365 “How Blessed Are They Who Trust in Christ”

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 who are 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 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 “Who On Earth Can Find God’s Kingdom?” (to the tune of no. 459, “Come, O Fount of Every Blessing”)

***Who on earth can find God's kingdom? Who can know God's wondrous reign?
How can we receive the freedom of a people born again?***

***Can we hear the winds a-blowing — where they come from and return?
Can we see God's kingdom growing? These are things we long to learn.***

***Nicodemus said to Jesus, "God must be at work in you!
Rabbi, you're a God-sent teacher; we can see the signs you do!"
Jesus saw his faith and questions, so he spoke these words of love:
"Surely, none can see God's kingdom, till they're born from God above."***

***Nicodemus kept on wondering, "How can one be born anew?"
Jesus said, "This is the birthing that God's Spirit brings to you.
If you want to see God's kingdom, do not be at all surprised.
You can't see God's Spirit moving, yet it's working, changing lives."***

***God, we see your world around us, and we wonder what will be.
Is your loving reign among us; is it something yet to see?
May we trust your Spirit's moving, giving life and hope and birth.
May we trust what you are doing, joy of heaven, hope of earth.***

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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.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE "Living for Jesus"

Gerald Peterson

References:

The Prayer of Invocation and the Prayer of Dedication are adapted from "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler, Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998.

The Call to Confession and Assurance of Pardon are adapted from both "Taught by Love" by Lavon Bayler, and from liturgies written by Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What is Good.' Used with permission.

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
Sherry Spencer, "Happy Birthday to all the March Birthdays!"