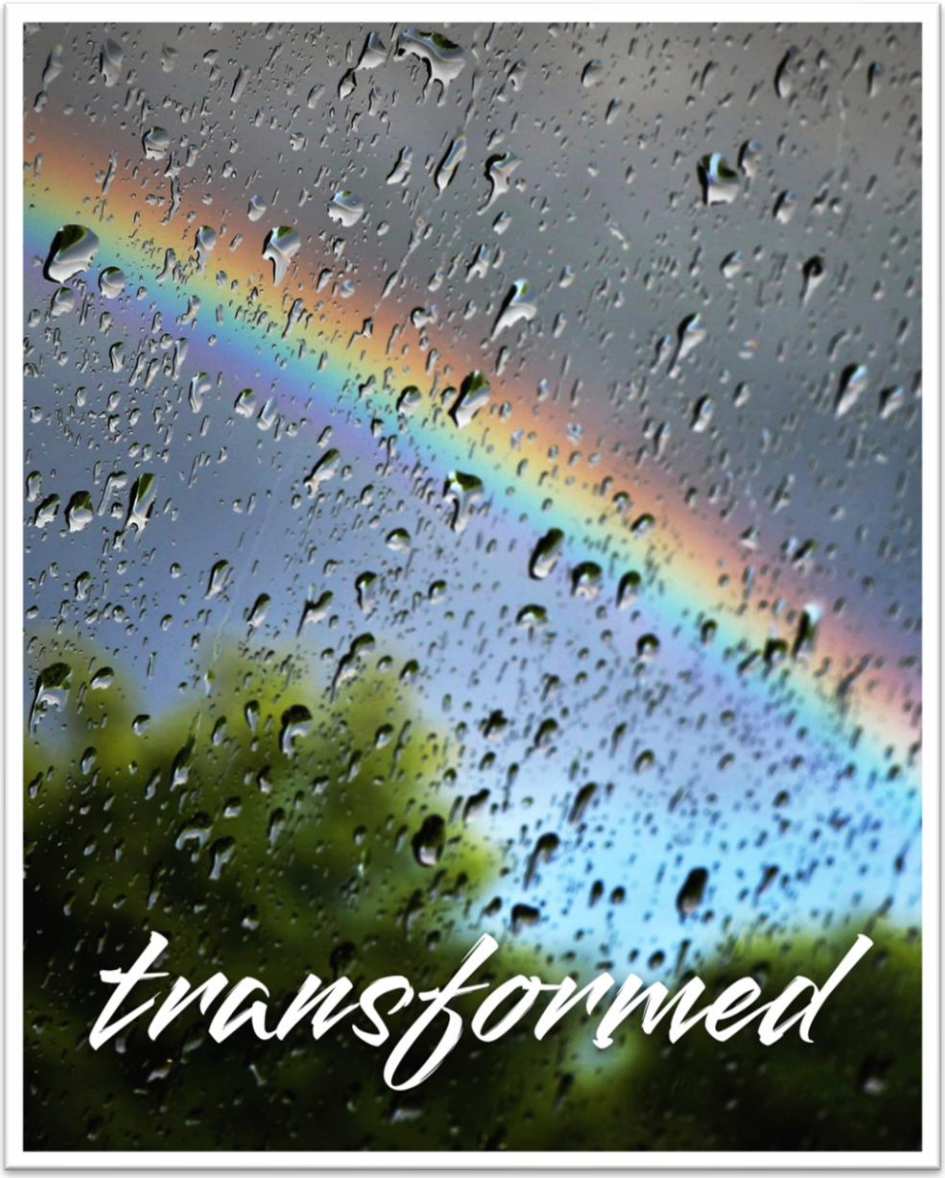
Welcome to

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

August 23, 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: Mary Runkle

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Benjamin Eisenhour
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Guest Organist: Dr. Robert Lau
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: Becky Thompson
Greeters: Don Dupes, Jodan Young, Brian Strohecker
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Deborah Cashman, Dale Thorpe
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Dale Thorpe and Don Dupes
Counting Team: Mary Runkle

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.

Text "SPUCCGIVE" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.
or at https://onrealm.org/saintpaulsuccmech/-/form/give/now

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

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST August 23, 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 "Blessed Assurance" Mark Davis

CALL TO WORSHIP A "targum[i]," by Sylvia C. Keesmaat & Brian Walsh of Romans 12:1

Therefore, sisters and brothers, friends in Christ,
if it is true that Jesus the Messiah is Lord,
and that no other leader,
or nation, or ethnic identity,
or institution, or system of economics,
or political structure can demand your ultimate allegiance;

if it is true that the gospel of Jesus is truer,
more radical,
and more transforming
than any other grand narrative
or worldview on offer; ...

if all of this is true...

then I urge you with everything that I have,
I appeal to you,
I call out to you,
in response to this radical, life-transforming good news of Jeus,

to offer up your bodies,
not simply your piety and your devotional life,
but your very bodies;

to offer up your bodies,
not your Twitter account, nor your online signature,
but your bodies put on the line for the sake of the gospel;

to offer up your bodies,
not your armchair punditry,
but the totality of your embodied existence;

indeed, to offer up your bodies,
the body of Christ,
the body politic of the incarnate Word,
assembling here and there in cells of resistance,
gathering to be formed in subversive discipleship,
coming to worship the One who liberates in the face of oppression,
the One who embodies justice and calls us to lives of his inclusive and costly justice;

...offer up your bodies as nothing less than a living sacrifice.

*THE HYMN No. 18 “Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer”

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Holy God, we offer our whole selves to You in service, as our acts of Worship. Please guide us in how You have uniquely called each of us to speak and act in these ways. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

We confess we often conform to the practices and beliefs of our culture. We do not necessarily allow our minds to be opened, to learn for the first time or once again, how God is calling us to live in ways different than our culture names as of highest value. Let us join in a time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and continues to speak to us from within and through the words and actions of others, that demonstrate what God has named as good, as acceptable, as loving.

ALL: Let us be renewed in mind and spirit and pursue lives that more reflect God’s calls for how we are to live, particularly as shown through Jesus’ words and actions. 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

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 GOSPEL SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 16:13-20

THE READING OF THE PSALM Psalm 138

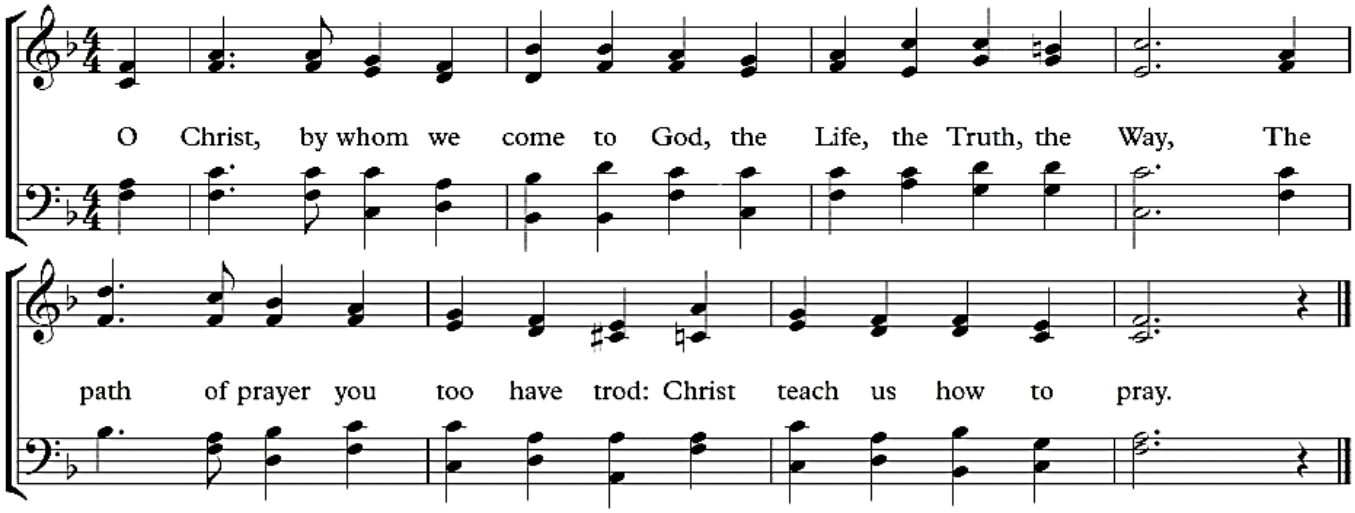
*THE HYMN No. 448 “Take My Life, God, Let It Be”

THE RESPONSE:
One: God is Still Speaking.
All: Thanks be to God!

THE EPISTLE READING & MESSAGE: Romans 12:1-13
“Who and What Shapes Our Living?”

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)



Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY Charles Ricedorf-Reed, Mark Dundore

*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)

Accept our offerings of praise in grateful thanksgiving for Your presence in our lives and the many blessings You bestow upon us. Consecrate our offering, O God, that it may become bread to fill the emptiness and heal the brokenness of the lives in this community and beyond. And may we be reminded that our real life begins when we give with generous hearts to proclaim the gospel in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 460 "Be Not Dismayed"

*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 online livestream ends after the Postlude.
You're welcome to converse in the Narthex after the Three-fold Amen.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE "Festive Voluntary" Robert Lau

References:

Call to Worship: Romans Disarmed: Resisting Empire/Demanding Justice, by Sylvia C. Keesmaat and Brian Walsh, found on pages 297-299, 2019, Brazos Press. The full "targum" is well worth the read found on pages 297-320 of the Apostle Paul's Letter to the Romans chapters 12:1- 13:14. 35 Scripture verses into 23 pages.

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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[i] A "targum" (as explained in this text on pages 23, 296-297) was an ancient Rabbinic practice in Synagogues away from Israel and Jerusalem. The Rabbis would translate the text into the language of the listeners and use current cultural understandings as a way of bringing the ancient text alive. They would also add context from previous sections of the Torah to better understand the meaning of the text being read. An early version of God Is Still Speaking?