

Welcome to
St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

August 25, 2024



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: Kathy Aumiller

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 Drazba
Greeters: Don Dupes, Sherry Spencer
Acolyte: Elsa Riesmeyer
Kids' Place:
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Patrice Miller
Counting Team: Sherry Spencer, Joan Moyer

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

626 Williams Grove Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
(717)766-7931

saintpaulsucc-mech.org

Office: stpaulstaff@outlook.com

Rev. John: revjohnwd@outlook.com

Rev. Allyssa: allyssaboyer@outlook.com



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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

August 25, 2024

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 "Be Thou But Near"

J.S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP

*THE HYMN No. 400 "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

Gracious God, we are grateful Your Presence is always within us, around us and amongst us. Help us to remember we still need to choose to follow You. May we encourage our families to do the same. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

The recognition that we have choices, can contemplate them, and have the freedom to choose right or wrong, is a skill limited to human beings. It is God's unique gift to us. We often do not recognize it as a gift and a responsibility. Let us join in a time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and reminds us, in various different ways and through various different people that we need to choose to follow God since it is not just something that is automatic.

ALL: **May we become more and more conscious of the choices we have, including choosing God, and may we exercise these choices with care. 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.**

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS (Unison)

May God's grace be upon these shawls...warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May these mantles be safe havens...sacred places of security and well-being...sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the ones who receive these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!

*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

Blessing of the Backpacks

One: God of fresh starts and new beginnings, we bring ourselves and our backpacks to You. In our backpacks, we carry tools for learning, and in our hearts, we carry big feelings, unanswered questions, and hopeful expectations. There are endless possibilities of what this new year might bring—of what we might learn, who we might meet, and who we might become.

All: Holy God, as school begins, we ask a blessing on these backpacks, briefcases, children, youth, and grown-ups who are heading into classrooms and workplaces. Help them to know that You are always with them. Send Your blessing upon students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for steady self-esteem and deepening resilience. We pray for minds that will expand in curiosity and wonder, learning not just from books but also from the people beside them. Open the minds of students—and remind us that we are all students—with a willingness to be changed in unexpected ways. Amen.

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 HYMN “God of All Learning” (to the tune of “Morning Has Broken”)

God of all learning, God of all knowing, We bring these backpacks filled with supplies. Bless all these tools of learning and growing. Use them, we pray, to change many lives.

Bless all the students, young ones and old ones — Walking or riding, traveling by bus. May they remember that you go with them, And that they all are precious to us.

Some kids are poor and some kids are wealthy; May we give all the tools that they need. May we make sure they're safe, loved and healthy So that they all may thrive and succeed.

Bless all who learn and bless those who guide them, Bless those who teach and counsel and care. May they remember you walk beside them. Through all their school days, you, Lord, are there.

Text: Copyright © 2015 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

THE EPISTLE READING

Ephesians 6:13-18

THE PSALM READING

Psalm 34:1-10

THE RESPONSE:

One: God is Still Speaking.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING & MESSAGE:

Joshua 24:1-2, 14-18

“We Have to Choose”

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)

The musical score is written for a unison choral response. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "In - to my heart, in - to my heart, come in - to my heart, Lord Je - sus; come in to - day, come in to stay, come in - to my heart, Lord Je - sus."

Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY “The Sheltering Rock”

Mercy Bartlett

*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)

May our giving add strength to the witness of Your church as we humbly seek Your truth and lovingly share it. Ready us to proclaim the gospel of peace in our homes, in our places of work and leisure, throughout our community and the world. Keep before Your people the awesome mystery of faith. May its power overcome the cynicism of our skeptical, self-serving age, uniting us in disciplines that are freeing and discipleship that is amazingly fulfilling. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 473 "Blessed Assurance"

*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 "Let The Trumpet Sound"

Lani Smith

References:

The Prayer of Dedication is from "Led by Love" by Lavon Bayler, 1996, United Church Press.

The Prayer of Blessing is by Janet Bristow, 2008, www.shawlministry.com.

The Blessing of the Backpacks is adapted from "Blessing of the Backpacks" in "Blessing of the Backpacks and Back-to-School Worship Liturgy" from Illustrated Ministry, <http://illstrtdm.in/BackToSchool>

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.

Songs, music, and lyrics used by permission. CCLI License #11380019 CSPL128945

ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Susan Gabriel, "In memory of friend, Raquel Westfall & mother, Joyce Carpenter"