



St. Paul United Methodist Church

*"An intentionally diverse faith community
Committed to the way of Jesus Christ"*

Saint Paul United Methodist Church strives to continue to be a caring and diverse community of believers who celebrate and proclaim the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ through Worship, Christian Education, Fellowship and Service.

December 2017

The Christmas Season at St. Paul

**Saturday
December 2nd
5:30 pm**



Let's get the church ready for Christmas! Join us on Saturday, at 9 am as we 'hang the greens'. Many hands are needed; all ages are invited! Lunch will be provided.

Let's kick off the Christmas season with our **Christmas Dinner & Carol Sing!** Ham, roast turkey, gravy and stuffing will be provided. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share. Stay to see favorite Christmas carols!

**Sunday, December 10th
Worship at 10:30 am**

The Sunday School children and youth will present "The Christmas Alphabet" during worship. Please plan to be in attendance to support our young people.



**Sunday, December 17th
Worship at 10:30 am**



Join us for a festival of Christmas carols as our choir presents "**A Christmas Carol Gallery**" arranged by Larry Shockley. The earliest known Christmas songs come from the 4th Century A.D. and have evolved and spread throughout the world to the present day. They have become a universal Christmas language.

Come, hear and sing many of your favorite and familiar carols as well as some unfamiliar ones as we lift our voices in love and praise to honor the birth of Jesus, our savior. Be sure to make this part of your holiday celebration!

**Sunday, December 24th
Christmas Eve**

Two opportunities for worship!

10:30 am service

11 pm Traditional Candlelight Service

We'll sing "Silent Night" as we light candles to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Light of the World.





Today while sitting in my office, the Spirit of Christmas began to officially infuse itself in my heart. It began while talking with our music director, John Gamble and listening to a song he shared written by Alfred Burt titled, "Some Children See Him". It made my heart rejoice as I reflected on the beautiful words which challenge us to understand how the world sees Christmas from so many different eyes, yet those of us who share in this great Christian faith somehow universally learn to see Him.

Our personal life experiences play such an important role in how we see the world. It often is so easy for us to become so critical of others- but when we see Jesus -we collectively see him for who he is! When we see the universal Jesus in all of us, we find the thoughts and perspectives of how we view our neighbors just may change. There's beauty in the mindset that even in our differences- we collectively see Him for who he is! Although it's not a part of the Christmas story per say, I'm reminded of the words written in 1 John 3:2 "Dear Friends ...now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known, but we know that when Christ appears, we will be like him, for we shall see him as he is". Even with our distinct features, varying skin tones, various perspectives and thought processes, the promise is that we will all be like Him!

When Christ came to this earth, the wise men came from their respective regions and cultural entities- yet they joined in solidarity for a universal journey and singular purpose- to witness the Savior Jesus Christ. As we gather together over this holiday season, let us observe each other intently. Let us look through all of our

differences, our personal experiences, our life struggles; let us look beyond the things we say and even the things we don't- all from the perspective of seeing the Jesus in each of us. Let us communally look to see the universal gift of all!

Kamarie, the children, and I are praying that you have a wonderful Christmas Holiday and that through all of the gift giving, all of the festive eatery, all of the story sharing and all of the praying- you all will clearly see Jesus Christ, the Savior of us all!

Pastor "G"



Longest Night Service

Thursday, Dec. 21st

7 pm

The Christmas season is often marked by expressions of joy, excitement, and happiness. It's a time for family to gather and for churches to worship pointing to the hope that is found in the coming of the Christ child. However, this time of joy and expectation can often overshadow the pain and hurt many experience during this season, when the world's merriment puts their grief and sorrow in stark relief.

A Longest Night service acknowledges that, for many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, sorrow, alienation, sadness, loss, separation, pain or sickness. This service offers a way for people to claim those feelings and still feel surrounded by the compassionate love of God.

A Longest Night worship service (also known as Blue Christmas) offers healing and hope to those struggling to find joy during the Christmas season.

Adapted from Ministry Matters

Invite those you know that may be struggling this Christmas season to come on Dec. 21st.

PEACE PEACE PEACE

CHRISTMAS CARDS



A St. Paul tradition, the **Annual UMCOR Christmas Card** project, is underway. To participate, simply figure out how much money you would spend on cards, stamps and time to send a Christmas greeting to those you see regularly in church. Instead of mailing cards to them, wish them Christmas blessings in person. Then send *one* signed card to the church along with your check for the amount you have calculated, with the notation 'UMCOR' on the memo line. Place your card in the special box in the hallway. All cards will be displayed on the Outreach bulletin board. *Donations will be directed to the UMCOR for hurricane relief.*



Donate Gloves & Scarves...

for the adults and children at Meals of Love. Check out your local Dollar Store or other stores and pick up hats, gloves, mittens and scarves to keep someone warmer this winter.

The **Mitten Tree** will be in the hallway until Dec. 8th to receive your contributions.

Meals of Love is also collecting toys, games, books and puzzles for children and items for teenagers (such as make-up, nail polish, stylus pens, flashlights, socks, ear buds, notebooks, pens, pencils, puzzle books, puzzles, etc).

PM – Dec. 11th at 1 pm at Charlie Brown's (Westampton)

HOPE – Dec. 18th at 6:30 pm at the home of May Diehl

JOY – Dec. 19th at 11:30 am at Carlucci's (Mt. Laurel)

UMW Circles



See the magic of the season in ballet! Our own Tiana Smith will be dancing in **The Nutcracker Café Au Lait** on Sunday, Dec. 17th at 4 pm at Villa Victoria Academy (376 Upper Ferry Rd, Ewing, NJ). Tickets are \$30 in advance/\$35 at the door (adults); \$15 for children 12 and under. For more information, please call Ms. Carol at 609-227-6348.

Our secretary will be undergoing surgery in early December. The office hours will be reduced during this time and through her recovery. *Please call the church office before coming to be sure someone is in the office.*



The office will closed for Christmas on Dec. 22nd & 25th. The office will be open Dec. 26th - 29th from 9 am – noon.

For pastoral emergencies, please call Pastor "G" (609-920-3467).



A Program of Prison Fellowship

Angel Tree is a program of Prison Fellowship that serves incarcerated parents by providing a pathway for strengthening and restoring their relationships with their children and families.

St. Paul has participated in this unique program for the past four years. We are asking volunteers to purchase a gift for a child on behalf of their incarcerated parent. If you would like to help, pick up an Angel Tree Tag after worship on Sunday, Dec. 3rd. Each Angel Tree child receives a minimum of 1 gift valued at approximately \$20. Bring the wrapped gift with Angel Tree tag on Sunday, Dec. 10th

Gifts will be given to the children at our Angel Tree Christmas Party on Saturday, Dec. 16th at noon.



Growing Gracefully

Monday, Dec. 11th
10 am

Enjoy a chair massage and get health

screenings. Call the church office if you plan to attend. Invite a friend!

From the Financial Secretary:

2018 offering envelopes will be available on the first Sunday of December in the hallway outside of the sanctuary. The Finance Committee has reduced the number of boxes ordered. As the highest number will now be 150, it was decided to renumber everyone in alphabetical order (in other words: everyone will have a new number). Just look for your name. If you no longer want envelopes or if you don't currently have envelopes and would like them, please notify the church office.



Soup-er Nite

Dec. 21st 5:15 pm

Once a month, friends and members of the church

gather for a light supper and conversation. There is no charge. Just come, enjoy the fellowship, and grow in friendship. We'd love to see *you* there!

This is a reminder that Sunday School classes *will* be held on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at 9:15 am. This is an exciting time for children to experience the joy of Christmas, so we are looking forward to your attendance.

The Sunday School students and staff wish to thank the congregation for their continued support and wish God's blessings for a beautiful Christmas and Happy New Year!



Looking for a unique Christmas ornament or gift?

The **Girls in God's Service Circle (GIGS)** is selling beautiful ornaments and gifts in Ridgeway Hall after worship. Your purchase will help support Ornaments4Orphans in providing scholarships for children in need and building a school in Uganda.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 2nd James Lamar
- 4th Rich Hall
- 5th Linda Dippold
- 7th Addie Hatten
- 10th Samuel Banks
- 13th Jack Howard
- 14th Laura Fisher
- 15th Nyla Davenport
- 17th Carol Copper
Tyler Wardle
- 20th Elisabeth Kreutel
- 22nd Fredicia Davies
- 23rd Davin Hines
- 25th Theresa Gaye
- 27th Carol Noble
- 31st Edith Baldwin



The Epistle

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If you no longer wish to receive The Epistle, please notify the church office at 609-877-7034 or stpumc@verizon.net.



Order deadline is December 10th!

Order form and payment may be sent to the church office or handed to an usher or Myra Rupp. (Please do not place in offering plate.)
Make checks payable to St. Paul UMC, with 'poinsettia' on memo line.

Name _____ Phone # _____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

Please indicate *how many* poinsettias you wish to order:

_____ Single Red (\$13.50 each) _____ Double Red (\$21 each)

Circle one: I will take / leave flowers for a shut-in.

Please give flowers to:

Name _____ Address _____

_____ I will help deliver flowers to shut –in.

Please note: Flowers may be taken after the Christmas Eve Service.

Questions? Call Myra Rupp (609-387-5785)