

St. Paul Messenger



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BINGO NIGHTS

All are welcome at our upcoming BINGO nights! Full refreshment bar, door prizes & fun with light music provided although you're welcome to bring your own food and drink.

November 23 @ 6 pm

January 11 @ 6 pm

Event tickets are still available for the first BINGO night of the evening at 6 pm. The event tickets are \$5 for 1 hour.



St. Paul Annual Meeting, Part 1

An informational meeting to answer questions and discuss the proposed 2025 budget is scheduled for **Sunday, December 1 following worship**. Part 1 of St. Paul's Annual Meeting is scheduled for **Sunday, December 8 at 10:30 am** (after worship). During the Annual Meeting we will elect new officers and adopt a budget for 2025. Immediately following the Annual Meeting, St. Paul's Evangelical-Conrad Kolmer Memorial Cemetery will have a short meeting of the congregation for the sole purpose of electing new Cemetery Board members. Part 2 of St. Paul's Annual Meeting will be **Sunday, February 9, 2025**. Annual reports from committee chairpersons are due to the church office by **Wednesday, January 29**.

Cemetery Clean-Up

Cemetery clean-up will be done on **December 1**. Please pick up any items you wish to save before that date.

November 24

Totenfest

On Totenfest we will remember our loved ones who have passed away since November 2021. To include your loved one on our list, kindly reach out to Carmen by Tuesday, November 18, providing their name and date of passing. St. Paul members have already been included.

Three Months of Fun & Faith for ALL Ages, Coming Right Up!

Dr. Jillian Mayer

Move over October because November at St. Paul UCC is going to be packed with exciting events, and you're invited!

First up, on **November 6 at 5:30 pm**, it's Messy Church! Come ready to get your hands dirty—literally. No need for a fancy outfit, because whether it's crafts, games or a splatter of barbecue sauce, we guarantee a mess and a lot of fun. Bring the family and prepare to dive into a fun Moana-themed look at the story of Jonah.



The youth are flipping pancakes on **Sunday, November 17 from 8:00 to 9:30 am** for a good cause. Swing by for a stack (or three) and help support local families in need this holiday season. Who knew carbs could be so charitable?

Finally, on **Sunday, November 24** join us for a Thanksgiving-themed LIFT program at **8:30 am**. There'll be gratitude, a side of inspiration and lots of opportunity for fun as a family.

Once we hit December, things will really kick into gear as we move into another Advent season! All adults are encouraged to join me this year for *Disrupting Darkness*, a powerful adult study series that explores how Christ's light breaks through the darkest places in our lives and the world. We'll begin the series with a retreat on **Sunday, December 1 from 10:30 am until 12:30 pm** (lunch included), followed by weekly Wednesday meetings at **11:00 a.m. (December 4, 11, 18 and January 8 and 15)**. During each session we'll gather to reflect, discuss and prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus—the Light of the World. I hope you can join me as we walk together in hope and seek to disrupt the darkness with God's love and truth. Please



Unable to participate in the adult Advent series? No worries, Advent devotionals for all (seniors, youth, children, and families) will be available outside the church office.

Everyone is invited to get in the holiday spirit with a Grinch-themed Messy Church on **Wednesday, December 4 at 5:30 pm**. Join us for Grinchy crafts, games and maybe even a heart growing three sizes. Spoiler: there might be green frosting involved.

On **Friday, December 6** we're giving parents the best gift of all—Parent's Day Off! From **11:30 am to 5:00 pm** (following the half-day dismissal of WCUSD #5 schools) we're inviting parents to send their children for a fun afternoon of Christmas crafts and activities. The event, which will raise funds for the Youth Scholarship Fund, will include lunch and all supplies and will cost \$20. Parents are invited to enjoy some kid-free shopping (or napping, we don't judge) on their afternoon off.



Next up, the cutest production of the year—the children and youth of our congregation/SPLASH will explore the animals present at the nativity with a production of *Manger Tales* on **Sunday, December 8**. Expect joy, adorable costumes and some unplanned line improvisation. You definitely won't want to miss it!

On **Sunday, December 15** our tiniest members will be hard at work in the Kindergarten Nativity Workshop, learning the Christmas story.

The fun will continue on **Sunday, December 22** with our LIFT program celebrating Jesus' birthday! We'll have

cake, party hats and that fun moment when we get to blow out Jesus' birthday candles for Him!

Finally, join us for **Christmas Eve worship at 5:00 pm** with music provided by our talented youth musicians. It's family-friendly and filled with the joy of the season. Come for the carols; stay for the cuteness!

As you can see, December will be full of heartwarming, festive fun. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

After a busy December, we'll be continuing to keep it in drive as we kick off the new year with a roar and some starry surprises!

January 5 will be all about Epiphany—that magical season where we reflect on the Star Words that will guide us through 2025. Need a word? Grab one at church and let it inspire you (or at least give you something to ponder while stuck in traffic). Unable to make it to church, let me know and I'll send a star

word (complete with star stone) your way.

We'll really kick off Epiphany at our **Messy Breakfast on January 5**. Beginning at **8:30 am**, Messy Church will be going wild with a Lion King theme. Expect hakuna matata vibes, plus crafts and activities that'll have you saying, "Can you feel the love tonight?" (Or at least the glitter glue.)

For our second graders, there's a Baptism Workshop on **Sunday, January 12 at 8:45 am**—a fun, hands-on way for the kiddos to explore what it means to take the plunge in faith (literally).

And don't forget our first LIFT of the year on **January 26**.

January's looking bright, full of stars and Simba moments. I hope to see you at any and/or all of our upcoming events!!

St. Paul Youth Group

This fall has been packed with fun, fellowship and faith-building activities for our youth! We kicked off the season with some high-flying fun at Slick City, where the group bounced, climbed and slid through an afternoon of adventure. To celebrate Halloween, we hosted a pumpkin carving night, letting creativity flow as everyone carved out some truly impressive designs around a fire-pit. We capped off the month of October with an action-packed paintball outing that tested both teamwork and courage.

Looking ahead, our youth group has even more in store as we embrace the spirit of giving. **On Saturday, November 16** we will be hosting a Rock-a-Thon lock-in from 6:00 pm until Sunday morning (It ends when the breakfast begins at 8:00 am) when the youth will be serving pancakes at their annual event to raise money for Christmas presents for local families in need. All proceeds from the Rock-a-Thon and pancake breakfast will go toward purchasing gifts.



Andy Mayer

At our first Sunday youth group meeting, **December 1**, we'll take a special shopping trip to buy the presents.

In addition to these events, don't forget our regular meetings! Around 20 youth gather each Wednesday evening (Our upcoming Wednesdays are November 13 and 20, December 11 and 18 and January 8, 15, 22 and 29.) and on the first Sunday of each month (Our upcoming Sunday meetings will be on December 1 and January 5.) for faith lessons, prayer and fellowship. It's always a great time to connect, grow in faith and have some fun together.

Be sure to mark your calendars and join us as we continue to serve and grow in God's love this season. Don't forget that any youth in 6th–12th grade is welcome to participate in any and all of our youth group programming!

Women of St. Paul



All members of the St. Paul congregation and their guests are warmly invited to an afternoon of delicious food and fellowship at Spikes Public House, located at 4 E. Washington in Millstadt, on **Tuesday, December 10 at 11:30 am**. The church van will leave the St. Paul parking lot at 11:10 am. If you need a ride, please mark an asterisk (*) next to your name on the sign-up sheet in the Church Lobby by Sunday, December 8. The service project will be purchasing gifts for the St. Paul Giving Tree, which aims to ensure local children in need have a joyful Christmas. Giving Tree tags will be available starting Sunday, November 10.

Epiphany Progressive Dinner for Hurricane

We have all seen the news coverage of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, lives lost, towns gone, families homeless, ruined possessions lining the curbs. Our sisters and brothers in Christ desperately need our help! Region 2 is planning an Epiphany Progressive Dinner for Hurricane Relief on **Saturday, January 4 starting at 4:00 pm** and including stops at four different UCCs for appetizers, soup and/or salad, an entree and dessert and a last look at Christmas decorations. For a freewill offering that will go entirely to hurricane relief, you will have an evening of delicious food, festive surroundings and fellowship. Plans are in the making, so mark your calendars and watch for upcoming details.



Blue Christmas



Join us for a comforting celebration of the season at our Blue Christmas program on **Tuesday, December 17 at 7:00 pm**. During the gathering we'll recognize that the holidays can be a challenging time for many, so we'll come together to offer solace, support and a sense of community. Together, we'll acknowledge all of the emotions that may accompany this time of year and find comfort in the company of others. Whether you're seeking a moment of serenity or a supportive community, our Blue Christmas program invites you to connect, share and find strength in the spirit of togetherness.

December Happenings

- ◆ **Sunday, December 1**
 - * 8:45 am, Sunday School
 - * 9:30 am, Worship with Communion
 - * 10:30 am, Disrupting Darkness Retreat—East Room
 - * 10:30 am, Budget Information Meeting—Sanctuary
 - * 3:00 pm, A Grand Christmas Concert—Sanctuary

- ◆ **Wednesday, December 4, 5:30 pm, Advent Messy Church**

- ◆ **Friday, December 6—Parents' Day Off (11:30 am–5:30 pm)**

- ◆ **Sunday, December 8**
 - * 9:30 am, Children's Christmas Program (during worship)
 - * 10:30 am, St. Paul Annual Meeting, Part 1—Sanctuary

- ◆ **Wednesday, December 11, 11:00 am, Advent Study, Disrupting Darkness**

- ◆ **Sunday, December 15**
 - * 8:45 am, Sunday School
 - * 8:45 am, Nativity Workshop for Kindergartners—Parish Hall
 - * 9:30 am, St. Paul Chancel Choir Cantata (during worship)

- ◆ **Tuesday, December 17, 7:00 pm, Blue Christmas**

- ◆ **Wednesday, December 18**
 - * 11:00 am, Advent Study, Disrupting Darkness
 - * 5:30 pm, Youth Group Christmas Party

- ◆ **Friday, December 20, 6:30 pm, Child's World Christmas Program—Sanctuary**

- ◆ **Sunday, December 22**
 - * 8:45 am, LIFT—Church Lobby
 - * 9:30 am, Worship

- ◆ **Tuesday, December 24**
 - * 5:00 pm, Christmas Eve Family Worship
 - * 8:00 pm, Christmas Eve Traditional Worship

- ◆ **Sunday, December 29**
 - * 8:45 am, Sunday School
 - * 9:30 am, Worship

Christmas envelope offerings will go to Monroe County House of Neighborly Service.

Notes from the Music Staff

Gary Humphrey

In this new version of the *Messenger*, we are covering the months of November, December and January, with a significant focus on Advent and Christmas. Throughout November, all musical groups will be active as we head toward Advent. We're excited to welcome a few new men to our Chancel Choir, and we hope you'll notice the difference! This month we'll present beautiful music from the Chancel, Chamber and Bell choirs. But the real excitement begins as we enter into Advent and Christmas.



This year, as part of our Fine Arts Concert Series, we will feature our annual Grand Christmas concert. You may recall that we had to cancel last year due to my detached retina, so we're thrilled to bring back this cherished event! As usual, we will feature the musical groups from St. Paul, along with several keyboard duets. The event takes place on **Sunday, December 1 at 3:00 pm**. Hope to see you there.

On Sunday, December 8 the kids are front and center for our annual children's program, showcasing the Sunday school and SPLASH children

as we look forward to the birth of our Savior! Then on **Sunday, December 15** our Christmas Cantata will be part of the service. This year, with the help of Renae Mayer's narration score, I have arranged the Cantata myself, titled "Jesus,

What a Wonderful Child!" I'm confident that you will love this effort to welcome Jesus into our midst.

Finally, on **December 24** we will have our normal two services: our family/children's service at **5:00 pm** featuring some of St. Paul's talented youth, and our traditional Candlelight Service at **8:00 pm**, which will feature the choirs of St. Paul and holy communion as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. As always, it promises to be a busy and joyful time.

In January we will return to our normal schedules as we head toward Lent and Easter. We look forward to "making a joyful noise to the Lord." Our goal, as ever, is to make worship that much more meaningful and to enrich the services as much as possible. Please join us.

Consistory Report—3rd Quarter Review

The Consistory stayed busy, as always, during the 3rd quarter of 2024. Below are topics discussed and voted on during this past quarter.

- Approved Linda and Carmen to attend ACS/Realm annual conference and training held October 8–10 in Charlotte, NC.
- Approved Personnel Committee's recommendation to offer medical insurance coverage to all full-time employees.
- Approved the purchase of a new air conditioning unit in the Church Lobby.
- OK'd the purchase of a new upright piano for the Music Room, using money from the Music/Choirs & Instruments Fund.
- Approved revisions to the Leadership Development Committee's profile.



Mission News

November Mission: Blessing Bags & the Giving Tree
December Mission: The UCC Christmas Fund
January Mission: To Be Determined

The November missions are the **Blessing Bags and Christmas Giving Tree**. In preparation for the holiday season we are planning once again to provide Thanksgiving Blessing Bags and Christmas gifts for clients of House of Neighborly Service.

Fill your bag with the non-perishable food items on the list to help clients of the House of Neighborly Service have a good Thanksgiving. Please try to get all the items on the list, check them off and attach the list to your bag. If this is too much for one person, try to get a partner to share the list with you. Our monetary mission contributions for

November will be used to buy a \$25 gift card for each Blessing Bag so that the recipients can buy meat. Bring your filled bag (with the list attached) back to church as soon as you have it ready. Bags will be displayed in the sanctuary. **All bags are due in the sanctuary on Sunday, November 17.**

Our congregation will again be partnering with the House of Neighborly Service in its Holiday Outreach program. **Our Giving Tree project will begin on Sunday, November 10.** Choose a tag from the tree and make sure to give your information to the people stationed by the tree.

The tag will tell you the age of the child and what that child would like for Christmas. Then go shopping and bring back the gifts! The gifts should not be wrapped, but be sure to have the tag attached. **All Giving Tree gifts are due back by Sunday, December 8.** The Mission Committee will deliver the gifts to HNS on Monday, December 9. Let's make this a great Christmas for the children of HNS clients!



This December, we invite you to join St. Paul mission in supporting the United Church of Christ's Christmas Fund, also known as the Veterans of the Cross. For over a century, this fund has been a lifeline for those who have dedicated their lives to serving our church.

From active and retired clergy to missionaries and lay employees, these individuals have given selflessly to our community. Your generous contributions will help provide emergency grants, supplemental support for small annuities and health premiums and "Thank You" gift checks to our lower-income retirees.

By supporting this offering, you're expressing your gratitude for their unwavering commitment and ensuring that they receive the care and support they deserve. Let's come together to honor their service and make a difference in their lives.

January's mission is yet to be determined. Please watch the upcoming *Midweek* emails for more details.



Child's World News

Theresa May-Harwell & Jamie Brown, Directors/Teachers

At Child's World we believe that what makes us truly special is the way we approach learning and relationships with our students, families and staff. We are pleased to announce that forty-four students walked into preschool this school year with so much joy on their faces when they saw old friends, met new friends and saw their classroom. We are looking forward to a year full of learning and growing.



We are relishing in all the fun, fall activities planned inside and outside of the classroom. God has blessed us with the beauty of autumn, and we will be enjoying the cooler weather and crisp colors that this season has to offer us soon enough. We had our first field trip, which was to the Waterloo Fire Department. It is always a favorite, especially meeting Sparky the Fire Dog and seeing those firetrucks up close! Trunk-or-Treating is another fall favorite here at Child's World. It is always such a huge hit! At the end of October, the parking lot was decked out in Halloween fun, and the children were dressed in their spook-tacular costumes for our Halloween party.

November and December will be just as busy at Child's World Preschool. With Thanksgiving quickly approaching, our thoughts are about what we will be eating that day and what we are grateful for. There are some in our community who are struggling to make ends meet and even wondering how they can put food on their tables. With the

current economy, we know far more families will be needing assistance this year. We are inviting our families to join us and St. Paul UCC in helping local families in need by providing a gift of food for the Blessing Bags for Thanksgiving. In November we want our students to focus on GIVING to others and being THANKFUL for what we have.

During the month of December we will be sharing the message of our Savior's birth with our students. Our most magical event of the year takes place in December, too. Our Christmas program is scheduled for December 20 in the church sanctuary. With the holiday season upon us, don't forget that Child's World Preschool is making your Christmas shopping a lot easier! We participate in the "Shop with Scrip" fundraiser. Look for our order form in the *Midweek* when it gets closer to November.

We can't end this message without shouting "thank you" from the roof tops! Our playground received some much-needed TLC with a load of mulch, and our hearts are so happy. Thank you for your hard work! We would also like to send a huge thank you to Mrs. Linda. She so graciously comes in on Thursdays and offers our students an interactive and fun music class. It is definitely the highlight of our week. Thank you to ALL the St. Paul staff and congregation for always supporting us, whether it is with our fundraisers, July mission, maintenance needs or prayers. We appreciate your help in keeping our preschool top notch!

Memorials/Gifts

Building & Equipment Fund in loving memory of Keith Taylor and Beverly Holmen

Child's World Improvement/Scholarship Fund in memory of Marcella Boehne

Community Meal Fund in honor and appreciation of Nathan Johanning

Music/Choirs & Instruments Fund in honor and celebration of Ron & Doyleene Daniels' 70th wedding anniversary

Neighbors in Need (October Mission) in loving memory of Beverly Holmen

