



January 11, 2026  
Baptism of Christ

No matter who you are,  
No matter where you are  
On life's journey,  
You are welcome here.

***Please silence cell phones.***

*Bibles for use during worship are available at each entrance to the Sanctuary. Assisted listening devices and Bluetooth hearing aid guides are in the Narthex. The Nursery and Toddler Room are open for children ages 0-5, from 10 to 11 a.m.*

## THOUGHT FOR PREPARATION

“Baptism marks the daily death of the old, sinning self, for in baptism we go down into the grave with Christ. But baptism also marks the rising of a new self, for we are resurrected with Christ and we emerge daily, to live new and righteous lives.”

Martin Luther

# PRELUDE

*Stumblin' Block*  
St. Arbucks Quartet

Kris Hansen

# INTROIT

*Ding, Dong Merrily On High*  
Chancel Choir

# CHIMES

# WELCOME

Jeff Carlson

\* WELCOMING EACH OTHER

\* CALL TO WORSHIP

One: O God, be with us now! Come to us and shape us.

**All: Shrink our despair down to nothing.**

One: Show us how great and good you are.

**All:** Let this be an hour of light!

One: Overwhelm the gloom we live within.

**All: Give us brightness. Give us brilliance.**

**Let us live inside your light!**

*\* Please stand if you are able to do so.*

\* HYMN

*O God Beyond All Praising*



1. O\_\_ God be - yond all prais - ing, We wor - ship you to - day
2. Then hear, O gra - cious Sav - ior, Ac - cept the love we bring,
3. The flower of earth - ly splen - dor, In time must sure - ly die,



And sing the love a - maz - ing That songs can - not re - pay;  
That we who know your fa - vor May serve you as our king;  
Its\_\_ fra - gile bloom sur - ren - der To you, the Lord most high;



For\_\_ we can on - ly won - der At\_\_ ev - 'ry gift you send,  
And wheth - er our to - mor - rows Be\_\_ filled with good or ill,  
But\_\_ hid - den from all na - ture The e - ter - nal seed is sown



At\_\_ bless - ings with - out num - ber And mer - cies with - out end:  
We'll tri - umph through our sor - rows And rise to bless you still:  
Though small in mor - tal sta - ture, To heav - ens gar - den grown;



We\_\_ lift our hearts be - fore\_\_ you And wait up - on your word,  
To\_\_ mar - vel at your beau - ty And glo - ry in your ways,  
For\_\_ Christ, your son, from hea - ven From death has set us free



We\_\_ hon - or and a - dore you, Our great and might - y Lord.  
And make a joy - ful du - ty Our sac - ri - fice of praise.  
And through him you have giv - en The fi - nal vic - to - ry!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Lord our God,  
it is not easy to follow you.  
The world calls us to worship power  
that acts quickly through force.  
Yet, your rule comes slowly through love.  
Even as we long for your peace  
we bow down to the ways of war.  
Let us be your joyful children  
in this tension.  
Forgive us. Renew us. Change us.  
Amen.**

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*Sunday School students are invited to go to  
Bible off Broadway rehearsal with their teachers.*

RESPONSE

*I Come to the Garden Alone*

v. 1



1. I come to the gar - den a - lone,\_\_\_ while the dew is  
 2. He speaks, and the sound of his voice\_\_\_ is so sweet the  
 3. I'd stay in the gar - den with him,\_\_\_ though the night a -



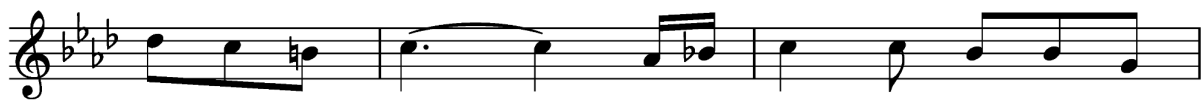
still on the ros - es; And the voice I hear, fall - ing  
 birds hush their sing - ing; And the mel - o - dy that he  
 -round me be fall - ing; But he bids me go; through the



on my ear, the Son of God dis - clos - es.  
 gave to me with - in my heart is ring - ing.  
 voice of woe his voice to me is call - ing.



And he walks with me, and he talks with me, and he tells me



I am his own,\_\_\_ And the joy we share as we



tar - ry there, none oth - er has ev - er\_\_\_ known.\_\_\_\_

## SCRIPTURE

Mark Sancya

### *Matthew 3 selections*

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. People poured out of Jerusalem, Judea, and the Jordanian countryside to hear and see him in action and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

When John realized that many Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptism because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "You brood of vipers! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! What counts is your life. Is it green and flourishing? Because if it's deadwood, it goes on the fire.

I baptize with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will ignite new life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. "

\* \* \*

Jesus then appeared, arriving at the Jordan River from Galilee. He wanted John to baptize him. John objected, "I'm the one who needs to be baptized, not *you*!"

But Jesus insisted. "Do it. God's work, putting things right all these centuries, is coming together right now in this baptism." So John did it.

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from the heavens said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

**\* STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**We believe in God who has created and is creating,  
who has come to us in Jesus Christ to reconcile and make us new,  
who works in us and others by the Holy Spirit.**

**We trust God. God calls us to be the Church,  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to love and serve others,  
to care for creation,  
to seek justice and to resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.**

**In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us.**

**We are not alone. Thanks be to God!**

*(adapted from the United Church of Canada)*

**\* RESPONSE**

*I Come to the Garden Alone*

vv. 2 & 3

**SERMON**

**"Hand Holding"**

**Matt Fitzgerald**

\* HYMN

*Precious Lord, Take My Hand*

1. Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,  
2. When my way grows drear, pre - cious Lord, lin - ger near,  
3. When the shad - ows ap - pear and the night draws near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
when my life is al - most gone,  
and the day is past and gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:  
Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:  
At the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.



GIVING MOMENT: What More is Saint Pauls Building?

Steve Garrett

OFFERTORY

*Ninye otpushaiyeshi*  
(Sung in Old Church Slovonice)

Alexandr Grechaninov

*Gloria Patri*  
Chancel Choir

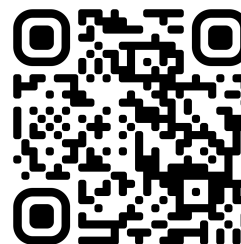
George Matterling

Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.  
For my eyes have seen thy salvation,  
which thou has prepared before the face of all peoples.  
A light as revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.  
*Luke 2: 29-32*

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

#### *ELECTRONIC OFFERING OPTIONS*

*Scan this code with your cell phone camera,  
Church Center at [spucc.churchcenter.com/giving](http://spucc.churchcenter.com/giving),  
PayPal at [spucc.org/paypal](http://spucc.org/paypal), or Zelle to [giving@spucc.org](mailto:giving@spucc.org).*

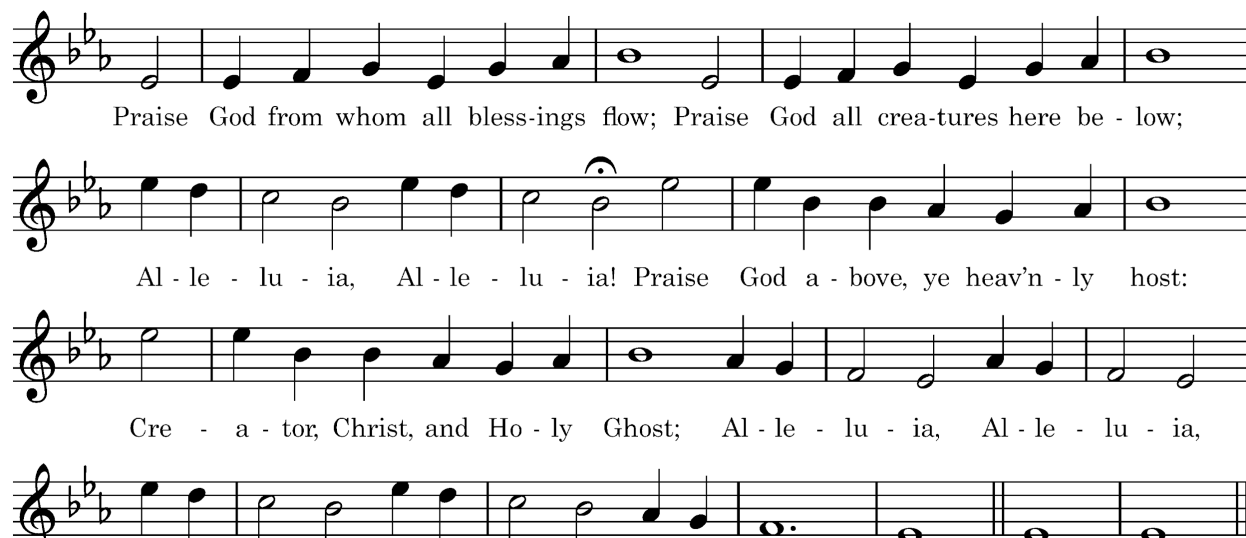


#### *WELCOME CARD*

*If you are a visitor, welcome! Thank you for  
worshiping with us today!  
If you would like to learn more about the church, please  
scan the QR code.*



\* FESTIVAL DOXOLOGY



The musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below each staff. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (half). The second staff continues: E4 (half), D4 (half), C4 (half), B3 (half), A3 (half), G3 (half), F#3 (half), E3 (half). The third staff: D3 (half), C3 (half), B2 (half), A2 (half), G2 (half), F#2 (half), E2 (half), D2 (half). The fourth staff: C2 (half), B1 (half), A1 (half), G1 (half), F#1 (half), E1 (half), D1 (half), C1 (half). The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here be - low; Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host: Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Ho - ly Ghost; Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men."

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures here be - low;

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heav'n - ly host:

Cre - a - tor, Christ, and Ho - ly Ghost; Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,

Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

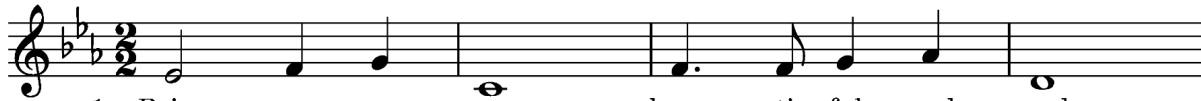
Liz Nickerson

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.**

\* HYMN

*Bring Many Names*



1. Bring man - y names, beau - ti - ful and good,
2. Strong moth - er God, work - ing night and day,
3. Warm fa - ther God, hug - ging ev - ery child,
4. Old, ach - ing God, grey with end - less care,
5. Young, grow - ing God, ea - ger, on the move,
6. Great, liv - ing God, nev - er ful - ly known,



cel - e - brate, in par - a - ble and sto - ry, ho - li -  
plan - ning all the won - ders of cre - a - tion, set - ting  
feel - ing all the strains of hu - man liv - ing, car - ing  
calm - ly pierc - ing e - vil's new dis - guis - es, glad of  
say - ing no to false - hood and un - kind - ness, cry - ing  
joy - ful dark - ness far be - yond our see - ing, clos - er



-ness in glo - ry, liv - ing, lov - ing God.  
each e - qua - tion, gen - i - us at play:  
and for - giv - ing till we're rec - on - ciled:  
good sur - pris - es, wis - er than de - spair:  
out for jus - tice, giv - ing all you have:  
yet than breath - ing, ev - er - last - ing home:



Hail and Ho - san - na! bring man - y names!  
Hail and Ho - san - na, strong moth - er God!  
Hail and Ho - san - na, warm fa - ther God!  
Hail and Ho - san - na, old, ach - ing God!  
Hail and Ho - san - na, young, grow - ing God!  
Hail and Ho - san - na, great, liv - ing God!

\* BENEDICTION

\* BENEDICTION RESPONSE

*Gloria Patri*  
Chancel Choir

George Matterling

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

POSTLUDE

*Wie schön leuchtet die Morgenstern*  
Kevin Dzierzawski, organ

Johann Pachelbel

## TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

**Clergy:** Jeff Carlson, Matt Fitzgerald, Liz Nickerson

**Music Director:** Kurt R. Hansen

**Organist:** Kevin Dzierzawski

**St. Arbucks Quartet:** Brendan Henry, piano; Alex Austin, bass; Matt Plaskota, drums; Kris Hansen, trumpet & vocals

**Scripture Readers:** Mark Sancya

**Giving Moment Speaker:** Steve Garrett

**Head Usher:** Beatrice Jaji

**Ushers:** Doug Clark, Fred Pearson, Doug Dunham

**Greeters:** Mercedes Ridao, Doug Dunham

**Gatekeeper:** Dodd Brown

**Camera Operators:** Nana Addadzi-Koom, Jim Alrutz, Marie Ankenman, Bob Ball, Brian Hafner, Trevor Hafner

**Custodian:** Ramiro Gonzalez

*Would you like to donate altar flowers? Sign up here: [tinyurl.com/4w6fu5js](https://tinyurl.com/4w6fu5js).*

## BORN THIS WEEK IN JANUARY

*We give thanks for your life at St. Pauls. A perfect way to celebrate is by giving one dollar for each year of your life to our Birthday Fund, which supports A Just Harvest.*

Jan. 11 Julianne Prangle

Jan. 12 Charlie Coe, Lauren Fangman, Susie Rodriguez, Erin Fitzgerald

Jan. 13 Ginger Hecht, Max Waldschmidt, Molly McGrath, Suné Millard

Jan. 14 Alexis Crouch, Harper Braun, Hunter Braun, Katie Huber, Scotland Keefer

Jan. 15 Adrian Broderick, Larry Simpson, Lindsey Liabo, Mark Sancya

Jan. 16 Alan Cramb, David Faulkner, Kristin Lane

Jan. 17 Mark Weglarz

## ST. PAULS PRAYS

*Please clip this page and pray for those who are named below. To have your prayer request included, simply ask a pastor in person, on the phone or by email.*

*You may also share your request at [tinyurl.com/3j6sayku](http://tinyurl.com/3j6sayku).*

*Our practice is to run each prayer request for four weeks and then remove it. If you would like to continue a prayer request after four weeks, let a pastor know.*

- The family and friends of Kevin O'Brien at his unexpected death the week before Christmas. A memorial service is being planned for Saturday, January 24th, at 10 a.m. at the church.
- The family of Susan Strattner, Ann Ferroni's sister, at her death.
- Matt Nickerson and Pastor Liz at the death of Matt's father, Jan. 1.
- Joe Ravelli, a friend of Pastor Liz, having serious back surgery on Jan. 15.
- Diane Biegert - hip replacement surgery on January 16.
- Tara Stephenson, who is recovering from surgery.
- Ember Sophia, who was born with a serious brain injury, and her parents, Alex and Liza.
- Paul Scanlan, Sare Scanlan's father, and Mark Huddle's brother-in-law, who is entering skilled rehab following heart surgery.
- Liz Kaplan, Mark Huddle's girlfriend, who is undergoing treatment for stage 4 lung cancer.
- Angie, struggling to recover from multiple surgeries.
- Alicia Braun and her family on the death of her father, Joseph Kroenert.
- Families undergoing treatments for infertility.
- Barbara Benjamin's husband, Tom Coffield, recovering from surgery.
- Prayers for Rick Sensenbrenner's mother, Marie, as she navigates various health conditions.
- Peace for all of God's children.
- Donn Schimp and his family as Donn continues cancer treatment.
- Dianne Witkowski, as she deals with cancer chemotherapy.

### **Prayer, Support, Mental Health Resources**

Even when you walk through the valley of shadows, God is with you. Help is available for every kind of issue. Contact one of the pastors today for support, referrals, and information that can help you and your loved ones.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **TODAY – BIBLE OFF BROADWAY REHEARSALS - 9:30 a.m., Social Hall**

Bible Off Broadway is coming on February 1, 2026! If you have kids age 3 through high school, remember that January's church school program is Bible Off Broadway rehearsals! Starting January 4, bring your kids to the Social Hall by 9:30 a.m. sharp each Sunday for the rehearsal kickoff. Whether on stage or behind the scenes, we'll have something for every young person to do and enjoy. Please fill out the BOB Parent Survey at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/QDF538W](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QDF538W) so we know what your child would like to do!

### **TODAY – LUNCH MAKING FOR LPCS - 11:15 a.m., Kitchen**

Right after church, come to SPUCC's kitchen and help make sack lunches for the residents of Lincoln Park Community Services. We provide all the needed food, but volunteers are asked to contribute \$25 each to help cover food costs for the lunches. Donations can be made via cash, Venmo, or Zelle. We're typically done by 12:15 p.m. If you're interested, please use Church Center to sign-up: [tinyurl.com/e4m9v9zz](https://tinyurl.com/e4m9v9zz).

### **TODAY – DINNER MAKING FOR LPCS - 4 p.m., Kitchen**

Join us in preparing and delivering dinner for residents of the Lincoln Park Community Shelter. We meet at SPUCC at 4 p.m. and deliver the meal to LPCS (600 W. Fullerton) around 6 p.m. We provide the needed food, but volunteers are asked to contribute \$25 each to help cover food costs for the dinner. Donations can be made via cash, Venmo, or Zelle.

If you're interested, please use Church Center to sign-up: [tinyurl.com/5dmys5hc](https://tinyurl.com/5dmys5hc).

### **JANUARY 14 & 21 – WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 2 PETER - Noon, Zoom**

What did it mean for the early Christians to follow Jesus in the midst of a violent world empire? How were they to live as an alternative community that looked like Jesus and not like Rome? These are questions they faced and that we also face in our post-Christian world. This winter we're studying 1 & 2 Peter, small books that wrestle with these big questions. Led by Jeff Carlson, we meet every Wednesday over Zoom for about 40 minutes. Sign up here: [tinyurl.com/y3w7fkpw](https://tinyurl.com/y3w7fkpw).

### **JANUARY 15 & 18 – MOMS' GROUP - Thursday 9:15 a.m., Sunday 11:30 a.m.**

Pastor Liz is looking forward to a meaningful discussion with you! Come meet other moms, make new friends, learn from each other, get advice, pray, and get renewed! Each month has a relevant theme on an issue you face as a mom. Free professional childcare is available. Babies can stay with their moms. RSVP to [lnickerson@spucc.org](mailto:lnickerson@spucc.org).

**JANUARY 26 – GAME NIGHT FOR GROWN-UPS - 6–8 p.m., OMR**

Join us for a laid-back evening of games, conversation, and connection—designed for adults who want to unwind, laugh, and enjoy good company. Whether you love board games, card games, or simply hanging out and chatting, you're welcome here.

Bring a favorite game to share—or jump in with games on hand like Pictionary, Jenga, or Sorry. Snacks are encouraged but not required; feel free to bring something to share if you'd like.

This is a drop-in, drop-out evening, so come when you can and stay as long as you'd like. Register at this link: [tinyurl.com/ypuwptae](https://tinyurl.com/ypuwptae) Questions? Text Wendelin (Lin) at (773) 304-6734 or email [wendelin@wendelindunlap.com](mailto:wendelin@wendelindunlap.com).

**JANUARY 27 – FOOD FOR THE SOUL: MUSIC AND WORSHIP HISTORY – PERSONAL HISTORY AND INTERFACE - 12–1:30 p.m., Social Hall**

Program provided by Kurt Hansen, Music Director. Adults of all ages are invited. Childcare provided.

**JANUARY 27 – MOM AND ME - ADULT & TOT MUSIC CLASS - 10:30–11:30 a.m.,**

Nursery - Babies 0-2 and their parent/caregiver are invited to an 8-week Kindermusik-like class. Questions and registration contact: [erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org](mailto:erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org)

**JANUARY 28 – COOKIES FOR A CAUSE (BAKE YOUR FAVORITE COOKIES AT HOME NOW!) - 5:30 p.m., Kitchen**

Join the St. Paul's cookie bakers for dinner, socializing, and cookie making on Wednesday, January 28. Meet us in the kitchen at 5:30 p.m. (or when you can). We eat dinner around 6:30 p.m. Cookies will be donated to A Just Harvest and the Lincoln Park Community Shelter. If you can't attend but want to contribute, drop off cookies labeled with your name and "MARCIA" at the church by Wednesday, January 28. To reserve a spot or find out what supplies are needed, contact Marcia Volk at [marcia@volkonline.com](mailto:marcia@volkonline.com) or (773) 307-6866, or Gloria Joseph at [glrjoseph@yahoo.com](mailto:glrjoseph@yahoo.com).

**FEBRUARY 1 – NEW MEMBER CLASS - 11:15 a.m., Room 211**

Join pastors, members and others curious about St. Pauls for our New Member Class. Together, we'll talk about faith and our community and we'd love for you to be part of the conversation! We'll meet after worship and childcare will be provided as needed. See upcoming dates here: [spucc.org/new\\_member\\_classes](https://spucc.org/new_member_classes).



### **FEBRUARY 6 – ST. PAULS SOCIAL WINE TASTING - 6 p.m., Parlor**

Join certified Sommelier and St. Pauls UCC member Joel Chaiken, WSET II, as we embark on a journey through the wonderful wines of Spain. We'll kick off with the bubbles of Cava, then journey through Rueda, Rioja, Ribera del Duero and Priorat. Remember - all are welcome, from novice wine drinkers to aficionados! We'll explore each region, tasting and savouring bubbles, whites, roses and reds, raise a glass or two in fellowship, and come together to support our migrant families. Bring a snack to share and a \$25 recommended donation will go to St. Pauls Migrant Legal Fund. Salud! There's limited seating, so RSVP with the following link: [tinyurl.com/45mykcwf](https://tinyurl.com/45mykcwf).

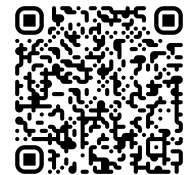
### **FEBRUARY 17 – BUDGET INPUT OPPORTUNITY**

St. Pauls' Giving and Finance Ministry develops an annual operating budget for Council review. The Congregation approves the budget during its annual meeting, scheduled this year on March 8. Congregation members have an opportunity to review the draft budget and provide input during a virtual meeting on Tuesday February 17 at 7:00 pm. Please register for this event in Church Center at [tinyurl.com/4r9c6e8e](https://tinyurl.com/4r9c6e8e). Contact St. Pauls' treasurer Allen Heinemann via Church Center with questions or feedback.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **NEW! OPT-IN TO TEXTING FROM ST. PAULS**

Want to receive reminders and announcements via text?  
Simply scan the QR code and fill out the form!



### **CAKE FOR SOCIAL HOUR – TODAY**

Please join David Faulkner on January 11th for social hour and cake in celebration of his upcoming 40th birthday!

### **JOINT UCC - DISCIPLES STATEMENT ON VENEZUELA ISSUED**

The United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ denominations issued a Joint Statement on the "Venezuela Takeover by the United States." The joint statement condemns recent military actions of the US regarding Venezuela and calls for "restraint, respect for sovereignty, and renewed commitment to peaceful, multilateral engagement." Per the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network, the UCC is a "just peace" denomination that stands for "diplomacy over domination, cooperation over coercion, and peace over war."

### **CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

Please register your K-6<sup>th</sup> Sunday School students, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation students, and High School class members by scanning this QR code.



## **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OPPORTUNITIES JANUARY 19th**

- **COMMUNITY RENEWAL SOCIETY** invites you to *Confronting Pharaoh: A Free Community Organizing and Movement Training*, a two-hour Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Faith In Action Assembly rooted in Dr. King's legacy of faith, courage, and collective action. This training, at Kenwood UCC, is open to all. You can find out more and register here: [tinyurl.com/2rn8mv4w](https://tinyurl.com/2rn8mv4w)

- **CHICAGO HISTORY MUSEUM** has a family-focused celebration of Dr. King's ongoing influence on the fight for civil rights, enjoy hands-on activities and learn how to become more civically engaged in our community. Admission is free for Illinois residents on this day. You can find out more here: [tinyurl.com/4aejed2s](https://tinyurl.com/4aejed2s)

## **THEOLOGY AND POETRY IN A YEAR**

What does it mean to say God is in control? What does Jesus accomplish? How should I live as a Christian? What kind of authority does the bible have? Led by Pastor Matt, this group is for those who want a clear understanding of Christianity. REGISTER HERE: [tinyurl.com/2hhd7bfe](https://tinyurl.com/2hhd7bfe) Rather than reading the work of a theologian, we will read eight poems a month, then meet over Zoom for a monthly class, for one year. Each set of poems will speak to a key Christian doctrine. You don't need to love (or even like) poems to join this lively, powerful program. At the end of the year, you'll understand Christianity better than ever, and may be transformed in other ways. Meetings will be in the evening, standing date TBD.

## **JUMPSTART GYM - NOW THROUGH MARCH 19**

Little ones are invited to start off winter 2026 with morning play time together! Parents/Caregivers supervise their children in an open-ended environment. Take advantage of our beautiful full-sized gym while it's cold outside and you need a place to get those wiggles out and socialize! Jumpstart Gym is open Thursday mornings from 9-9:45 a.m. \$75/family. Register here: [tinyurl.com/78dxekpu](https://tinyurl.com/78dxekpu). Reach out to Erin Fitzgerald at [littlelights@spucc.org](mailto:littlelights@spucc.org) if you have any questions.

## **STAY & PLAY - 10-11:30 a.m., Rainbow Room 104**

You're invited to Stay & Play, a friendly group for parents/caregivers with babies/toddlers to meet and build community together. This drop-in group meets on Friday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. We provide the space to socialize and play. This is a wonderful way to ease into our Little Lights program. By acclimating to the classroom ahead of time, children are ready for classes as they enter preschool age. There is no fee, but a \$5 donation per group is appreciated! Space is limited - please complete this one-time registration [tinyurl.com/3umxj6y8](https://tinyurl.com/3umxj6y8) for communication purposes.

### **PALESTINE STUDY GROUP**

We resume our study with 2025 National Book Award winner Omar El Akkad's *One Day, Everyone Will Always Have Been Against This*.

In this accessible and powerful work, a novelist interrogates the role of media, universities, law, politics, and culture in the destruction of Gaza.

Our first discussion of chapters 1-3 will be Sunday, January 25th @ 5:00pm via Zoom. Contact David Burnett at [burnett.db@gmail.com](mailto:burnett.db@gmail.com) or join the group via Church Center.

### **INTERGENERATIONAL ORCHESTRA – MUSICIANS WANTED**

Our Intergenerational Orchestra will again perform in worship on March 8, 2026.

Orchestra members include pre-teens, teenagers and adults of all ages and abilities.

We especially encourage young people and new members to participate! The orchestra is open to anyone who plays an orchestral string instrument or a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument. Rehearsals are on Sundays immediately after church for an hour, on 2/8, 2/15 and 2/22. Contact Mark Mosley at (773) 732-0625 or [mwmosley@gmail.com](mailto:mwmosley@gmail.com) to learn more. Join us as we “Make a Joyful Sound in the City!”

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT WITH CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

Have you been looking for an opportunity to become more involved in the St. Pauls community? The Nominating Committee is beginning to fill vacancies on the Church Council and our Standing Ministries. Every Ministry has vacancies to fill with terms beginning in March 2026. You can learn about the Council and Ministries at [spucc.org/Governance](http://spucc.org/Governance). To be considered for a position, please reach out to Nominating Committee Chair Jan Bail at [JanBail@me.com](mailto:JanBail@me.com) or (773) 472-5678.

### **YOUTH CHOIRS**

Does your child like to sing? Sign them up for one of our youth choirs! We rehearse Sunday mornings: Kinderchapel Singers (preschool) 9:50-10 a.m., Social Hall. Children's Choir (K-3rd) 9:30-9:55 a.m., Chapel. Paul's People (4-8th) 9:30-9:55 a.m., Parlor. Reach out to Tom Clancy (KS) [tm.ferrin@gmail.com](mailto:tm.ferrin@gmail.com), Breanna Coe (CC) [breannacoe@gmail.com](mailto:breannacoe@gmail.com), or Kecia Waldschmidt (PP) [keciagerman@hotmail.com](mailto:keciagerman@hotmail.com) for more information. Come make a joyful sound in the city with us!

### **CHILDREN/YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

There are many ways you can serve as a volunteer with the children and youth ministry at events, with Sunday School, and in the nursery. If you love nurturing children, this is a fun way to make a difference! Volunteers complete a background check and always serve in pairs of two, following our child safety policy. Whether you can help for a few hours a month or on a regular basis, your time and kindness will make a meaningful impact. Sign up for a Sunday nursery childcare slot here: [tinyurl.com/2j5dy6fp](https://tinyurl.com/2j5dy6fp) or contact Pastor Liz at [lnickerson@spucc.org](mailto:lnickerson@spucc.org) to learn more about other opportunities to help.

## **VOLUNTEER AS A SOCIAL HOUR HOST**

Visiting a new church can feel intimidating—especially walking into Social Hour without knowing anyone. We're looking for volunteers to serve as Social Hour hosts. The role is simple: be on the lookout for people you don't know, greet them, and help them feel welcome. They might be new to St. Pauls or simply someone you haven't yet met. Either way, you'll brighten their day and make new friends. You can volunteer once a month, once a quarter, or whenever it works for you. Sign up to host on an upcoming Sunday here: [tinyurl.com/3f384fcm](https://tinyurl.com/3f384fcm).

## **ST. PAULS MIGRANT HOUSING PROJECT LEGAL FUND**

St. Pauls housed five Venezuelan migrant families in our building over the past two years. Today, nearly every single member of these families has achieved legal status, helping to safeguard their presence in Chicago for the time being and allowing them to work. Such legal aid is costly and ongoing. In a time of wild anxiety and uncertainty for these new friends, you can help make a difference for our migrant families by supporting our legal aid fund. If you'd like to make a donation, please choose "Migrant Housing Project - Legal Fund" from the drop-down menu on our giving page: [spucc.churchcenter.com/giving](https://spucc.churchcenter.com/giving).

## **HAVE SOME ODD JOBS? WE'VE GOT SOME WILLING WORKERS!**

As they continue to work at supporting themselves financially, members of our migrant family friends would love to work for you. They are available for such tasks as house cleaning, handyman repairs, moving items, painting, deck-staining, demolition & clean-up, and carpentry on things like deck and dry-wall. We have been assigning work at a rate of \$25/hour and ask that the jobs be a minimum of 3–4 hours. You can find out more by contacting our Migrant Housing Project Coordinator David Brown at [dbrown@harrington-brown.com](mailto:dbrown@harrington-brown.com).

## **"HEALING HEARTS" PET SUPPORT GROUP: ST. PAULS PET LOSS COMMUNITY**

Are you struggling with losing a beloved furry friend/companion/animal assistant? Losing a pet can be one of the most heart-wrenching experiences in life. At Saint Pauls, we understand the deep bond you shared with your beloved pet/family member and we're here to offer support, understanding and a virtual shoulder to lean on. To join, visit [tinyurl.com/healing-hearts-support](https://tinyurl.com/healing-hearts-support). We meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 7–8 p.m. Age 18+ only, 30 participants maximum.

### **LITTLE LIGHTS ENROLLMENT**

Preschool ages welcome: We have spots open in our Early Childhood Education classes. Flexible options available. We model and facilitate problem-solving strategies, build empathy and develop self-regulation skills. Through hands-on learning and play, children will benefit from structured socialization and gain a greater sense of themselves within our St. Pauls community. If you are interested in learning more, visit our website at [littleglightslp.org](http://littleglightslp.org) or contact Erin Fitzgerald at [erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org](mailto:erin.fitzgerald@spucc.org).

### **LOSS AND GRIEVING DISCUSSION GROUP**

We've all lost someone we loved. Whether you lost someone you loved last month, last year, or five years ago, you can still grieve that loss. Grief changes, but it never goes away. Would you be interested in sharing stories with others who are in similar situations? We're not therapists, just your friends and neighbors who are also grieving and would like to share our ideas and learn how others are coping. We're planning to start a grief support group at St. Pauls, but we need to make sure there's interest. Please contact Pam Woll at [pamelawoll3333@gmail.com](mailto:pamelawoll3333@gmail.com) if you think this might benefit you.

### **CREATION CORNER by Green Team**

Recycling Christmas Trees and Greens

The City of Chicago has an active recycling program for natural trees and greens, from January 3rd to January 17th. Please remove lights, tinsel, bags and decorations before recycling.

There are 27 locations within the Chicago Park District where you can recycle. Moreover, beginning January 5th, there are some sites where you can also pick up free mulch made from these recycled trees.

To determine which site is closest to you, please go to: [chicago.gov](http://chicago.gov) and then key in "Holiday Tree Recycling."

### **STEPHEN MINISTRY AT ST. PAULS**

Our Stephen Ministers are here for you if you are going through a tough time. Extensively trained in compassionate Christian caregiving, Stephen Ministers are matched confidentially with someone in our congregation who is going through a crisis, such as the death of a loved one, a diagnosis, a divorce, a job loss, etc. They meet with you once a week for an hour to offer support through listening, companionship and prayer. If you wonder whether having a Stephen Minister might be helpful for you, please speak with Pastor Jeff, [jcarlson@spucc.org](mailto:jcarlson@spucc.org). Every one of us could benefit from a Stephen Minister at some point in our lives.

**St. Pauls UCC**  
**Giving Campaign 2026**  
October 12, 2025 – January 11, 2026  
Total: \$1,059,488.48  
Total households pledged: 209

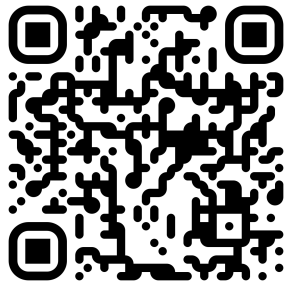
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**What More Are We Building?**

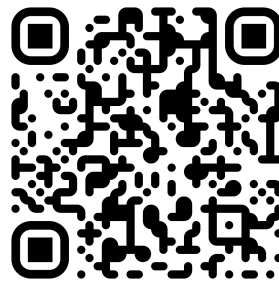
## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

Scan the QR codes to discover ways to connect with others.

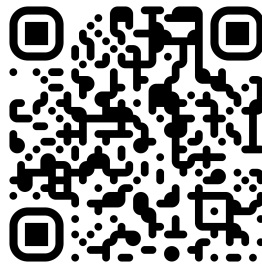
### JOIN A GROUP



### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



### SUBMIT AN ANNOUNCEMENT



For St. Pauls sponsored events, please fill out the new form **by 10 a.m. on Wednesdays for publication in the Friday email and next Sunday bulletin.** Share personal announcements/events on our Facebook group page, St. Pauls Together. **Please limit announcements to 100 words.** Thank you!

## TODAY'S MUSIC

***Stumblin' Block*** was composed in 2025 by Kris Hansen (b. 1995). The music expresses a collective experience of support. Kris is a member of our St. Arbucks Quartet. He was raised, baptized, and confirmed at St. Pauls. He is an active singer, music producer, composer, trumpet player, and keyboard player in his own group, Semi-Cycle. He also performs regularly with other bands including: The Walters, Kweku Collins, and Othersides. This work will be on the St. Arbucks EP, which will be released soon.

***Ding, Dong, Merrily On High*** employs a text by George Radcliff Woodward (1848-1934). He was an ordained Anglican clergy who served 6 parishes in his lifetime. He was also responsible for the translation of many Greek, Latin and German hymn texts. The joyful tune, BRANLE DE L'OFFICIAL, was composed in 1588 by Thoinot Arbeau (1520-1595). His given name was Jehan Tabourot. Arbeau was his more well known pen name. He wrote a famous book about 16th century French dance styles.

***O God Beyond All Praising*** is by Gustav Holst (1874–1934). The tune is called THAXTED, which is the main theme of the Jupiter movement from Holst's *The Planets*. It is truly a majestic hymn. Thaxted is the village where Holst grew up. It was Ralph Vaughan Williams that adapted "Thaxted" as a hymn. The author of our text is Michael A. Perry (1942–1996). He began studies as a physicist and changed to theology.

Both the text and tune, GARDEN, for ***I Come To The Garden Alone*** were composed in 1913 by C. Austin Miles (1868-1946). He was an American pharmacist from Pennsylvania. He abandoned that career to compose gospel songs. He composed hundreds of them and eventually owned the publishing company that printed song books.

***Precious Lord*** was composed by Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993). Dorsey's likeness was recently added to our music windows on the south aisle along with J.S. Bach and Mahalia Jackson. He began his career as a blues pianist and songwriter. Later he became a church choir director here in Chicago at Pilgrim Baptist Church and was a co-founder of the National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses. Widely known as the "father of the gospel song," he played an important role in the development of African-American gospel music. This is his best-known song and was composed following the tragic double death of his first wife Nettie and their new born son in 1932. It was a great comfort to Mr. Dorsey in his grief and countless



others who have sung it. Among those that sang it with Dorsey was Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972).

***Ninye otpushaiyesi***, commonly known in Latin as the *nunc dimittis* or the Song of Simeon, was composed by Alexandr Grechaninov (1864-1956). He is primarily remembered for his liturgical music for the Russian Orthodox Church. This is a setting of Simeon's prayer upon seeing the child Jesus. God promised Simeon that he would live to see the Messiah. Grechaninov moved from the Soviet Union to France in 1925. He immigrated to the United States in 1939, and spent the rest of his life here. Old Church Slavonic has a similar relationship to modern Russian as Latin does to Italian.

George Matterling added the ***Gloria Patri*** in the style of Grechaninov. While the Gloria Patri is a prescribed response in liturgical western churches to biblical readings or anthems on biblical texts, it is not part of the liturgy in the Russian Orthodox Church. **A note for this time** - The Russian Orthodox Church was said to be founded by St. Andrew, one of the 12 disciples, when he journeyed from Greece to what became Kiyv, Ukraine but was then known as *Kiyvan Rus'* (land of the Rus').

The text for ***Bring Many Names*** was written by Brian A. Wren (b. 1936). He is a major British contributor to contemporary hymn writing. He was a pastor of a Congregational Church in Essex. WESTCHASE was composed in 1989 by Carlton R. Young (b.1926). He served in World War II and became a teacher, editor, composer and conductor. He edited two editions of the United Methodist Hymnal.

***Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*** is known to us in English as an Epiphany hymn, *O Morning Star, How Clear And Bright* that can be found in our Black Hymnal No. 158. The chorale melody was composed in 1598 by Philip Nicolai (1556-1608) who was a Lutheran pastor, poet, and composer. This chorale melody was so beloved that it was set by many composers including Bach (1685-1750). Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706) is not well known outside music circles, but his compositions, especially for organ and choir, provided a deep foundation for German composers in the following generation like Bach and his contemporaries.

# **Special Music Theme 2025-2026**

## **Joyful Sounds**

Enjoy another year of special music during worship services.

Mark these dates in your calendar!

**Sunday, March 15, 2026 - Lenten Cantata**

***Jesu meine Freude* - Bach**

**June 13, 2026 - 7 p.m.**

***Gospel Mass* - Robert Ray**

A benefit for the National Gospel Music Museum with Pilgrim Baptist Church,  
UCAN and St. Sabina Church.

Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church

5141 South State Street

Chicago, IL

## **ABOUT ST. PAULS**

*Making a Joyful Sound in the City!*

St. Pauls UCC has a vibrant history in the city of Chicago. Founded in 1843, we are one of the city's oldest churches. In 1989, we became one of America's first congregations to declare ourselves "Open and Affirming" of LGBTQ+ people.

From founding Chicago's largest provider of social services to at-risk children to starting a home for the elderly, from housing protestors at the 1968 Democratic Convention to hosting Lincoln Park's first MLK day march against violence on Chicago's streets, we are proud to make a joyful sound in the city.

Most important, during the past 180 years we are glad to have introduced thousands of children and adults to the amazing, inclusive, life changing, uplifting love of God. We do so in worship that is traditional, but far from conventional.

Senior Pastor Matt Fitzgerald, [mfitzgerald@spucc.org](mailto:mfitzgerald@spucc.org)

Associate Pastor Jeff Carlson, [jcarlson@spucc.org](mailto:jcarlson@spucc.org)

Associate Pastor Liz Nickerson, [lnickerson@spucc.org](mailto:lnickerson@spucc.org)

For a complete list of St. Pauls Staff, Governance, and Lay Leadership  
Please visit [www.spucc.org/contact](http://www.spucc.org/contact)

**St. Pauls United Church of Christ**  
**2335 N Orchard St. | Chicago, IL 60614**  
**(773) 348-3829   [www.spucc.org](http://www.spucc.org)**

Free Parking is available Sundays from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
at the Lincoln Common Parking Garage, 2316 N. Lincoln Ave.  
Parking validation is available in the Narthex.



## **WELCOME TO SAINT PAULS UCC!**

Welcome to those whose hearts are on fire with faith,  
and to those who bring their doubt inside our doors.

Welcome to our first time guests and  
our longtime members.

Welcome to single people, tiny children,  
grandparents and families of all configurations.

Welcome to those who rejoice and to those who grieve.

Welcome to LGBTQ+ people.

Welcome to each and to everyone.

We are blessed by your presence and  
we are glad you are here.