

January 4, 2026  
Communion, Baptism, &  
Epiphany Sunday

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

"The morning began as a long poem on the inalienable dignity of light."

John Cheever

PRELUDE                  *Prélude sur l'Introït de l'Épiphanie* Op.13                  Maurice Duruflé  
Kevin Dierzawski, organ

# CHIMES

INTROIT *O Morning Star, How Clear And Bright*  
Chancel Choir

WELCOME Liz Nickerson

\* WELCOMING EACH OTHER

\* CALL TO WORSHIP *based on Isaiah 60*

One: Rise and shine, for our light has come!

**All: The glory of God has risen upon us!**

One: Darkness had covered the earth, thick darkness over all people.

**All: But God's glory has risen upon us!**

One: And God will be our everlasting light.

**All: Rise and shine, for our light has come!**

**The glory of God has risen upon us!**

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

\* HYMN

*We Three Kings*



1. We three kings of O - ri - ent are; bear - ing gifts we
2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain, gold I bring to
3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I; in - cense owns a
4. Myrrh is mine; its bit - ter per - fume breathes a life of
5. Glo - rious now be - hold him a - rise; King and God and



tra - verse a - far, field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain,  
crown him a - gain, King for - e - ver, ceas - ing ne - ver,  
De - i - ty nigh; prayer and prais - ing, voi - ces rais - ing,  
gath - er - ing gloom; sor - rowing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing,  
sac - ri - fice: Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia,



fol - low - ing yon - der star.  
o - ver us all to reign.  
wor - ship - ing God on high. O \_\_\_\_\_ star of won - der, star of light,  
sealed in the stone - cold tomb.  
sounds through the earth and skies.



star with roy - al beau - ty bright, west - ward lead - ing,



still pro - ceed - ing, guide us to thy per - fect light.

## THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM OF

Leo Stephen Becker

Pastor: Leo, receive now the Light of Christ. May you walk always as a child of light. May your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and give glory to God. Leo is now received into the love and care of the church. See what love God has given us that we should be called children of God.

**All: Almighty God, giver of life, you have called us by name and pledged to each of us your faithful love. We pray for your child, Leo. Inspire his life. May he sing many songs, know many joys, heal many wounds, and embrace many people in your name. We pray for his parents, that they may be guided by your love so that they may know your presence. May we walk together with this family as witnesses to your gospel, as those for whom you have lived and died and live again. Amen.**

Pastor: Leo, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you always.

**All: Amen**

*Sunday School students are invited to go with their teachers  
for Bible Off Broadway Class/Rehearsal.  
If you would like to accompany your child(ren),  
you are welcome to drop them off and return to worship.*

\* HYMN

*Jesus Loves Me*

1. Je - sus loves me! This I know, for the Bi - ble tells me so.  
2. Je - sus loves me! This I know, as he loved so long a - go,  
3. Je - sus loves me! Still to - day, walk - ing with me on my way,

The first system of the hymn is written in 2/2 time. It features a treble and bass staff with a grand staff bracket. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides a simple harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staff, with three verses provided.

Lit - tle ones to him be - long; they are weak, but he is strong.  
Tak - ing chil - dren on his knee, say - ing, "Let them come to me."  
Want - ing as a friend to give light and love to all who live.

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staff, with three verses provided.

Yes, Je - sus loves me! Yes, Je - sus loves me!

The third system continues the melody and accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staff, with two verses provided.

Yes, Je - sus loves me! The Bi - ble tells me so.

The fourth system concludes the hymn. The lyrics are written below the staff, with two verses provided. The system ends with a double bar line.

## SCRIPTURE

Louise Gram

### *Matthew 2:1-12*

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

\* 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

*Be Thou My Vision*

*verses 1-2*

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
3. Rich - es I heed not, nor life's emp - ty praise,  
Nought be all else to me save that thou art,  
I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
Thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
Moth - er and Fa - ther, thou art both to me,  
Thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,  
Wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
Thou in me dwell - ing, thy child I shall be.  
Rul - er of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.

SERMON

“The Dignity of Light”

Matt Fitzgerald

\* RESPONSE

*O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright*



1. O Morn - ing Star, how fair and bright Thou beam - est forth in  
2. Thou heav'n - ly Bright - ness! Light di - vine! O deep with - in my



truth and light! O Sov - ereign meek and low - ly! Thou Root of Jes - se,  
heart now shine, And make thee there an al - tar! Fill me with joy and



Da - vid's Son, My Lord and Mas - ter, thou hast won My heart to serve thee  
strength to be Thy mem - ber, ev - er joined to thee In love that can - not



sole - ly! Thou art ho - ly, Fair and glo - rious, all - vic - to - rious,  
fal - ter; Toward thee long - ing Doth pos - sess me; turn and bless me;



Rich in bless - ing, Rule and might o'er all pos - ses - sing.  
Here in sad - ness Eye and heart long for thy glad - ness!

GIVING MOMENT

Nathan Chamberlain



OFFERTORY

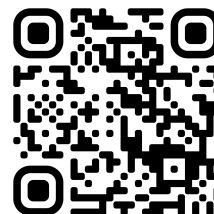
*There Shall A Star Come Forth From Jacob*  
Chancel Choir

Felix Mendelssohn

There shall a star come out of Jacob,  
and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel;  
With might destroying princes and nations!  
As bright the star of morning gleams,  
So Jesus sheddeth glorious beams  
Of light and consolation.  
Thy word, o Lord,  
Radiance darting, truth imparting,  
Gives salvation;  
Thine be praise and adoration!  
*based on Numbers 24: 17*

*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 would like to learn more about the church, please  
scan the QR code.*



\* FESTIVAL DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise God all crea-tures 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.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Liz Nickerson

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Forgive us, God, when we stay in the palace  
and ignore the stable.  
Renew us with the spirit of the magi  
who did not grow weary in their quest to be with you,  
offering both the best of what they had,  
including true humility.  
Accept our fears and proud opinions,  
our apathy towards change and renewal.  
Restore our light-starved souls.  
Through Christ Jesus. Amen!**

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

WORDS OF INSTITUTION & PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

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.**

SERVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

*Please come forward for communion.  
Take the bread and eat it. Then take the cup and drink.  
Deposit the cups in the baskets on the way back to your seat.  
The outer ring of cups contains grape juice. The inner rings contain wine.  
A gluten-free bread option is wrapped and available on a separate tray.  
Return to your seat by the side aisles.  
All are welcome to take part in communion.*

\* PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

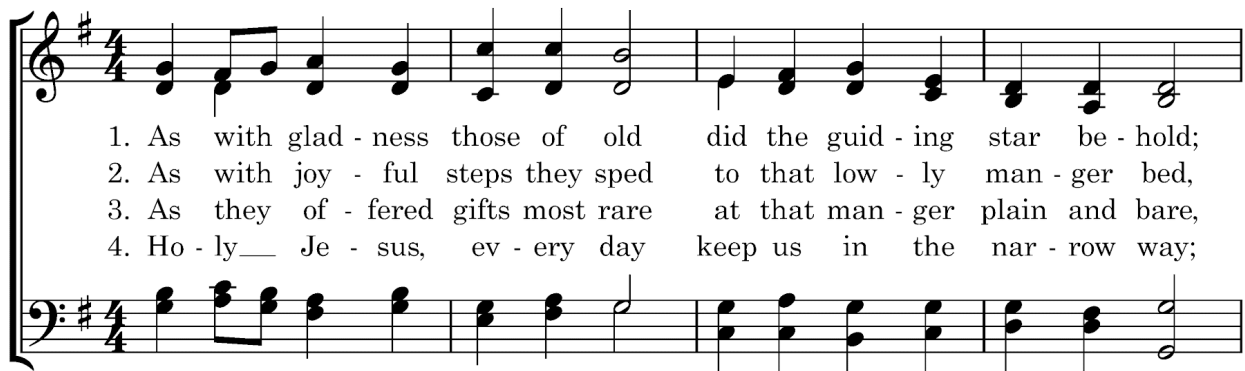
**Holy God, we thank you for the mysterious and wonderful gift of the Word made flesh—Jesus Christ. God with us. Now and always. Thank you. Amen.**

COMMUNION MUSIC

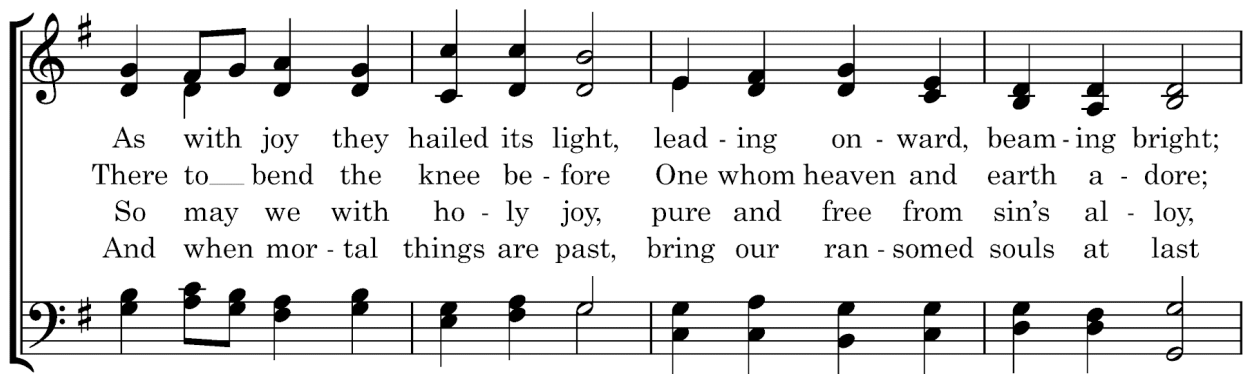
Kevin Dzierzawski, organ

\* HYMN

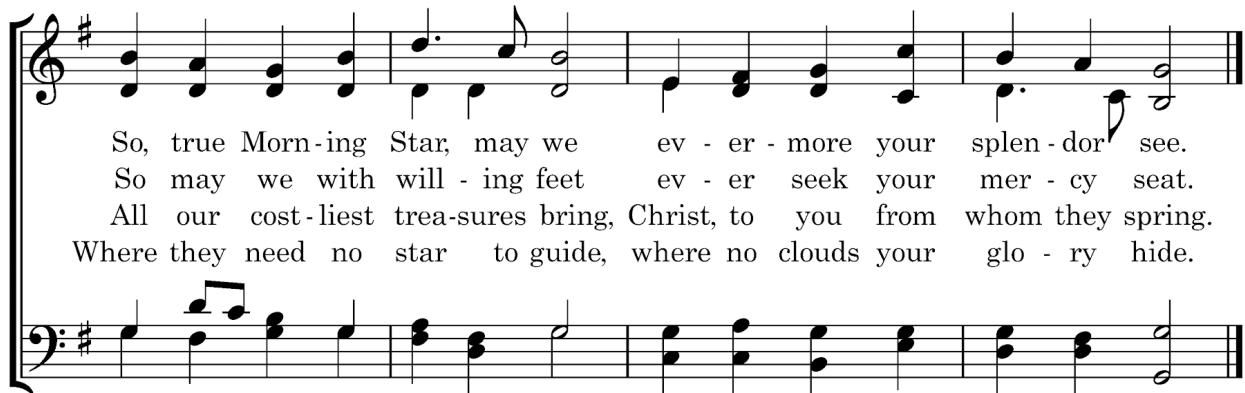
*As With Gladness Those of Old*



1. As with glad - ness those of old did the guid - ing star be - hold;  
2. As with joy - ful steps they sped to that low - ly man - ger bed,  
3. As they of - fered gifts most rare at that man - ger plain and bare,  
4. Ho - ly\_\_\_ Je - sus, ev - ery day keep us in the nar - row way;



As with joy they hailed its light, lead - ing on - ward, beam - ing bright;  
There to\_\_\_ bend the knee be - fore One whom heaven and earth a - dore;  
So may we with ho - ly joy, pure and free from sin's al - loy,  
And when mor - tal things are past, bring our ran - somed souls at last



So, true Morn - ing Star, may we ev - er - more your splen - dor see.  
So may we with will - ing feet ev - er seek your mer - cy seat.  
All our cost - liest trea - sures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.  
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds your glo - ry hide.

\* BENEDICTION

\* BENEDICTION RESPONSE

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef).  
System 1: The vocal line begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note Bb4, and a half note C5. The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a half-note pattern in the left hand.  
System 2: The vocal line continues with a half note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F5, and a half note G5. The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.  
System 3: The vocal line concludes with a half note A5, a quarter note Bb5, a quarter note C6, and a half note D6. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord in the right hand and a half note in the left hand.

Glo - - - - - ri - a

in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo - - - - -

- - - - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - - o.

POSTLUDE

*I Saw The Light*  
St. Arbucks Quartet

Hank Williams

***A Surprise Christmas Gift! Pledges Received by January 16 Will Be Matched.***

The Giving Committee is happy to announce that we have received an unanticipated Christmas gift! A Saint Pauls member pledged \$50,000 to our 2026 campaign, to be used as a matching fund for any and all pledges or increases to existing pledges, received by January 16th. Between December 19 and January 16th, the first \$50,000 in new or increased 2026 pledges will be doubled! To make a pledge, fill out a pew card or pledge online at [spucc.org/pledge](https://spucc.org/pledge).

To increase a pledge already made for 2026, contact our Bookkeeper, Claire, at [bookkeeper@spucc.org](mailto:bookkeeper@spucc.org).



## TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS

**Clergy:** Liz Nickerson, Matt Fitzgerald

**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 Reader:** Louise Gram

**Communion Coordinator:** Jana O'Brien

**Head Usher:** Beatrice Jaji

**Gatekeeper:** Dodd Brown

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

**Custodian:** Ramiro Gonzalez

*Communion bread baked by Kristin Lane.*

**TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS** are given by Emma Becker in celebration of Leo Stephen on his baptism and the joy he brings us.

*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. 4 Hailey Ardell

Jan. 5 Sally Glowiak

Jan. 6 Liz Harper

Jan. 7 Courtney Sensenbrenner, Jeff Wagner, Peter Kaiser

Jan. 8 Caleb Patton

Jan. 9 Grayson Colosi-McCann

Jan. 10 Bethany Grachan, Colleen Wood, Mark Workman-Mandell

## 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.*

- Diane Biegert - hip replacement surgery on January 16.
- Ember Sophia, who was born with a serious brain injury, and her parents, Alex and Liza.
- Susan Strattner, Ann Ferroni's sister, who is battling a difficult illness.
- 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.
- Paul Scanlan, Sare Scanlan's father, and Mark Huddle's brother-in-law, who is hospitalized with a heart infection.
- 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.
- The Camp Mystic families who are suffering unimaginable loss from the July 4th floods.
- 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!

### **JANUARY 7 – NEW YEAR, NEW BIBLE STUDY BEGINS! - 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'll be studying 1 & 2 Peter and Jude, 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 9 – 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.

### **JANUARY 9 – FAITH FAMILY FRIDAY - 6-8 p.m., OMR & Gym**

Faith Family Fridays are full of fun, fellowship, and food with your church family! All ages welcome. Main entree (pizza) provided by St. Pauls Youth Ministry. Feel free to bring your own beverage, side, or game to share. This event is free, but registration is required for food count. \$10/family suggested donation. Register here: [tinyurl.com/4j4933ps](https://tinyurl.com/4j4933ps)

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

Right after church, come to SPUC'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).



**JANUARY 11– 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 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 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)

## **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 – JANUARY 11**

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

### **CARING FOR CREATION – WATER**

The EPA has public comment deadlines this week for two proposals to cut protection for clean water. Please comment to the EPA (using links below), to Congress and to friends who might help.

1) To remove protections from U.S. waters by changing definitions in the Clean Water Act, visit [tinyurl.com/mshwrekt](https://tinyurl.com/mshwrekt). Deadline: Jan. 5, 2026.

2) To further extend the deadline for coal-fired power plants to cease dumping toxic ash into unlined pools which contaminate water, visit [tinyurl.com/yw7hdrst](https://tinyurl.com/yw7hdrst).  
Deadline: Jan. 7, 2026.

Comment texts are available from EarthJustice and Sierra Club (#1 only). Customize for impact.

For more info, contact [GreenTeamReg@att.net](mailto:GreenTeamReg@att.net).

## **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 – JANUARY 8-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.

## **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!”

## **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.



## **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](http://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](http://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 2025–2026**

Fall Incentive Rewards program: Register for 25-26 classes by December 2025 and receive \$500 off tuition! Flexible class options and days 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 about early education classes for your child, visit our website at [www.littlelightslp.org](http://www.littlelightslp.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**

Caring for Creation: Tips for Better Nutrition

The following dietary recommendations by Trisha Parshina, MD, columnist for the Washington Post, are important to remember during the holidays:

1. Choose healthier animal proteins, moving from red meat to yogurt, fish and chicken.
2. Eat more fiber to preserve a healthy gut microbiome, this means choosing a variety of high-fiber plants, nuts and fermented foods.
3. Embrace whole grains- brown rice, quinoa, farro- and stay away from white rice and white flour.
4. Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages, including fruit juices; instead, eat whole fruit and drink plenty of water. Curtail alcohol consumption.

## **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: \$946,489.28  
Total households pledged: 178

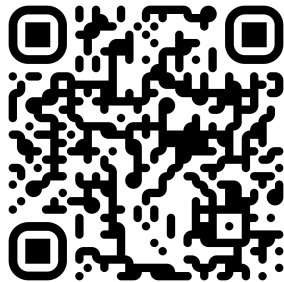
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**What More Are We Building?**

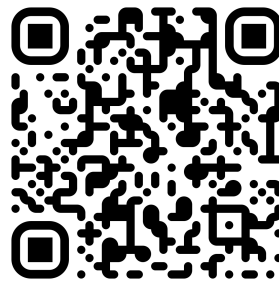
## WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

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

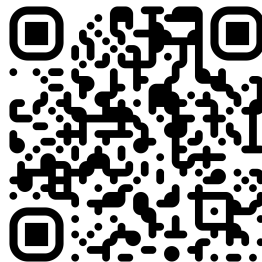
### JOIN A GROUP



### 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

***Prélude sur l'Introït de l'Épiphanie*** (Prelude on the Introit for the Epiphany) Op13 was composed in 1961 by Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986). Duruflé took the chant melody *Ecce advenit dominator Dominus* (Behold! The Lord is coming!), which is from the Mass for the Epiphany. Duruflé use chant as an inspiration for many of his works, especially his setting of Requiem.

***O Morningstar, How Clear and Bright*** is one of the most beautiful German hymns, and it is prescribed for Epiphany. Philip Nicolai (1556-1608) adapted a version of a Psalm 100 chant and composed this melody and German text in 1599. The English translation is by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878). Winkworth, although born in England, spent many years in Dresden, which is why she was so adept at translating German chorales. She was also a tireless fighter for women's rights. The tune name, WIE SCHÖN LEUCHTET MORGENSTERN, is the first line of the original German text. We will hear it 3 times this morning: the Introit, the Sermon Hymn, and it is also quoted in the Offertory Anthem.

***We Three Kings*** is a truly American hymn. It was composed in 1857 by an Episcopalian priest, John H. Hopkins (1820–1891). His father was the Bishop of Vermont. Hopkins was also an ecclesiologist, which means he was interested in church art. He designed stained glass and other church ornaments.

***Jesus Loves Me This I Know*** is one of the first hymns many children learn. The words are both simple and profound. They were written in 1859 by Anna Bartlett Warner (1824-1915). She was born in New York City, wrote many hymn texts and collaborated with her sister Sarah on novels. The composer of the tune, JESUS LOVES ME, is William Bradbury (1816–1868). He penned this sweet melody in 1861. He also composed the famous hymn *Just As I Am*.

***Be Thou My Vision*** is a lovely Irish folk tune, SLANE. The translation was made in 1905 from the original Gaelic by Mary E. Byrne (1880 - 1931), who was born in Ireland. She was a respected university level academic in Dublin.

***There Shall A Star Come Forth From Jacob*** is a chorus from an unfinished oratorio Christus Op. 97 composed in 1847 by Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847). Like Mozart, Mendelssohn had a very short and artistically productive life. He was born in Germany, but a great source of his popularity was outside his home country. He was especially beloved in England. Amongst his greatest accomplishments was the revival of the works of J.S. Bach, and the first “modern” performance of Bach's St.

Matthew Passion since his death. Mendelssohn's Elijah is performed in England almost as often as Messiah, which is, of course, by another "adopted" German, Handel. This chorus also closes with his setting of the German Epiphany chorale *Wie schön leuchtet Morgenstern*, How Brightly Shines The Morningstar.

***As With Gladness Those of Old*** is set to the tune DIX, which was composed by W. Chatterton Dix (1837–1898). Mr. Dix also composed the original lyrics. He was a Scottish insurance company manager who also published a number of volumes of hymns.

***I Saw The Light*** was composed and recorded in 1952 by Hank Williams (1923 - 1953). He was a best-beloved country music singer and composer. In his all-too-short life, he recorded 35 singles and 11 of those reached number 1 on the Country & Western charts.

## **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.