

United Methodist Church

December

2024



stpaulneunitedmethodistchurch.com

Office hours
Tues-Thurs
Summer Hours
9am –1:00 pm
754-4247

Staff

Rev. Nicole
Schwartz-Eck

Church Secretary
Carrie Hancock

Custodian
Integrated Life Choices
Call Church Office

Committee Chairpersons:

Admin Council
Bob Rasmussen

Board of Trustees
Doug Voigt

Finance
Dave Harrington

Staff/Parish Relations
Tom Knutson

Worship
Darla Voigt

Mission-Outreach
Mary Ann Rickertsen

UMM
Tom Knutson

UWF
Charlene Craig
Carol Phillips

Education
Nancy Harrington

Embracing Advent at St. Paul UMC

As we enter the season of Advent this year, I am reminded once again that while many things around us change, some things remain constant. Our congregation and my family have experienced changes, yet so many of the traditions we hold dear endure. These cherished customs reflect both our shared United Methodist heritage and the unique ways we, as a congregation and as a family, bring new life to beloved Advent and Christmas traditions. Advent is a season of waiting and preparation—a time to ready our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ, both as the babe in the manger and as the returning Savior promised at His ascension. This central message of Advent never changes. In Christ's birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection, and eventual return, we discover hope, peace, joy, and love. We experience the transformative power of God's grace and forgiveness. We find life—and life abundant.

This is the heart of what we celebrate during Advent and Christmas. While preparing our homes and church building with decorations, lights, and traditions may bring joy and beauty to the season, these are outward expressions. What truly matters is how we prepare our hearts and lives to receive Christ anew. Advent at St. Paul UMC

There is much to look forward to at St. Paul UMC this Advent season!

In worship, our sermon series, "Coming Home for Christmas," will explore the "gospel homes" of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Together, we'll reflect on where Christ's story begins in each gospel, how the Christmas story unfolds, and the gifts of Christmas that these scriptures hold for us. On Sunday, December 22nd, we will host our interactive and intergenerational Christmas program during worship. Every child in attendance—whether they join us regularly, are visiting for the first time, or fall somewhere in between—will have the opportunity to participate in a costume or role. It will be a joyful morning as we celebrate the nativity together. In addition to our Sunday services, we have several special worship opportunities:

***Blue Christmas Service:** On Thursday, December 19th, we will hold a contemplative Blue Christmas Service. Traditionally known as "Longest Night" services, these gatherings offer healing and hope for those who find it difficult to experience joy during the Christmas season. It's a space to bring your stress, grief, or busyness before God and worship in peace. While many churches hold these services on the winter solstice (December 21st), we are holding ours a few days earlier.

***Candlelight Christmas Eve Service:** Our Candlelight Christmas Eve service will take place on Tuesday, December 24th, at 5:30 p.m. This beautiful tradition is one of my favorite services of the year, and I hope you will make it part of your celebration this Christmas.

Opportunities for Outreach

Advent is also a time to embody Christ's love through service. Here are some ways to get involved:

***Christmas Cheer Program:** Our church is actively participating in Christmas Cheer, with tags for families available at church and other community locations. I am deeply thankful for the way our congregation supports this incredible program.

***Serving at the Food Pantry:** On Saturday, December 21st, from 9 to 11 a.m., we will serve at the Food Pantry.

***Care Facility Candlelight Services:** On Sunday, December 22nd, we will lead Candlelight Christmas Services at local care facilities. These services will take place at Matelyn at 5:45 p.m. and Brookfield at 6:30 p.m., ending with the lighting of candles and singing Silent Night. Please join me in sharing this meaningful time of worship with the residents.

I hope you will embrace the opportunities to worship, serve, and reflect this Advent season. I also invite all of you to join me for a time of fellowship and food at the parsonage. Our family would like to welcome you for a Christmas Open House on December 14th from 2-4. Everyone is welcome! Together, may we prepare our hearts and lives to receive the greatest gift of all—Christ Himself.

Pastor Nicole

December

1st	Adult Sunday School– 9am Worship 10 am– Communion 1st Sunday of Advent Children’s Church during worship	18th	St. Paul Youth Group 6:30pm Finance meeting 7:30pm
4th	St. Paul Youth Group 6:30pm	19th	Community Office Hrs– 8:00-10:00am Location: Bedhead Blue Christmas worship service– 5:30pm
5th	Community Office Hrs– 8:00-10:00am Location: Bedhead	20th	Christmas Cheer distribution day at the church 11am-1pm
8th	Adult Sunday School– NONE this week Worship 10 am 2nd Sunday of Advent Children’s Church during worship	21st	UMC helps at the Food Pantry 9-11am
10th	UWF Meeting– 11:30am- meet at The Den	22nd	Worship 10 am 4th Sunday of Advent Children’s Christmas Program during worship Nursing Home services in the evening
11th	St. Paul Youth Group 6:00pm- YG goes caroling	24th	Christmas Eve service– 5:30pm
12th	Community Office Hrs– 8:00-10:00am Location: Bedhead	25th	Christmas Day
14th	Open House at Pastor Nicole’s house 2-4pm	29th	Worship 10am
15th	Adult Sunday School– 9am 3rd Sunday of Advent Worship 10 am Children’s Church during worship		



November Attendance

November 3rd:	65 In-person 13 Views/YouTube
November 10th :	64 In-person 18 Views/YouTube
November 17th:	50 In-person 36 Views/YouTube
November 24th:	68 In-person 26 Views/YouTube

November Offering Totals

November 3rd:	\$4,932
November 10th:	\$1,951
November 17th:	\$4,916
November 24th:	\$2,227



United Methodist Church Prayer Chain

The purpose of the prayer chain is to offer special prayers for individuals in critical need. The chain cannot be activated without the permission of the family in need. Call prayer requests to the church office 754-4247. The prayer request will be called to the first person on these lists. Each caller then calls the next person on the list. If that person is unavailable, a call should be placed to the following name and contact made with the first party later in the day. Last name on list does not call anyone. We are in need of more people joining the prayer chain. Praying for each other is an important ministry that we can do for our church family.

If you would be interested in becoming part of this mission, please contact the church office.

We are in need of more people joining the prayer chain. All you have to do is pray for someone as the requests are made. **Please consider this request to help.**

Marilyn Wall	754-5100	Martha Voigt	754-4666	Jackie Cook	754-9115
Deb Wells	754-5620	Darla Voigt	750-1401	Charlene Craig	754-5503
Nancy Harrington	750-0279	Rose Ross	754-4993	Mary Ann Rickertsen	754-4038
Theda Van Horn	754-4541	Cherri & Scott Klingensmith	750-0615	Mary Pearson	308-219-0060
Cleo Edwards	754-4853	Charlotte Rasmussen	308-863-2281	Brenda Starkey	750-7967
Nancy OR Mike McCarthy	750-2117-Nancy (775)-830-9521 -Mike			Lory Thomsen	754-4286

UWF Dedicated Light Award

During worship service on November 3rd, Vanice Bahensky was recognized by the UWF. A Dedicated Light Award from the UWF was accepted by Vanice's son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Darlene Bahensky. Vanice will be greatly missed in our congregation!



Christmas Cheer is Underway!



Applications have been collected, and the elves are busy getting ready for Christmas Cheer distribution day. Please remember, beginning the first week of December, there will be a collection of gloves, hats, mittens and socks to give away. These will be collected at our church and also at Citizens Bank.



If you would like to purchase a gift for a child or family (\$30-\$35 limit per gift), gift tags will be available at Citizens Bank as well as here at the church. These tags will also be available the first week of December, but you may want to act fast as they will go quickly (especially the tags here at the church). These gifts will need to be returned to the church by **December 13th**.

If you aren't able to do any shopping, financial donations may be made to the church or directly at Citizens Bank.

Please make checks out to Howard County Christmas Cheer. Distribution day of the gifts will be on **December 20th from 11am-1pm** here at the church.

A huge *thank you* to those who work behind the scenes to pull it all together!

Teacher's Prayers

At St. Paul United Methodist Church, we have made a commitment to our local schools. This has stemmed from both the commitment the Great Plains Annual Conference (Kansas and Nebraska) of the United Methodist Church made entering into partnerships with public schools in their communities to support schools, teachers, and students and our own desire to support the schools, teachers, and students to see our community and world transformed in positive ways.

St. Paul United Methodist Church has several ways that we hope to fulfill this commitment and find new ways to partner with our schools. This year, our congregation is praying for the teachers, administrators, and staff of schools by name, each for a week. If you know of teachers from our congregation that teach at other districts or substitute teachers that would not be listed on the St. Paul district website, please let

Pastor Nicole or the church office know so we can add them to our teacher prayers. Thank You!

Each Sunday, we will begin praying for the following teachers:

December 1– Boyd Bowder, Stephanie Holdsworth,
Maria Montemagni, Doug Voigt, Alex Lindsay

December 8– Danielle Spencer, Catherine Lemmerman,
Marcia Wardyn, Trisha Hedman, Libby Beck, Nancy Harrington

December 15– Curt Dubas, Jason Meinecke, Dan Scheer,
Mary Mrkvicka, Janelle Morgan, Philip Thede



Baptism and New Members

Say hello to two new members in our congregation. On November 24th, Hailee Stark was baptized and she and Riley Ward were made new members to UMC.

WELCOME!



Around our Connection

Take a look at what's happening around us!

Converge 2025- Converge 2025 is an opportunity for 8th-12th grade youth to have an impactful weekend that will strengthen their faith and build meaningful connections with other United Methodist youth. **Talk to Pastor Nicole if you are interested.**

More information and registration can be found at <https://convergeumc.com/converge/>

METour 2025- The four-day trip, for young women ages 15-20, will provide hands-on mission experiences at several United Methodist mission sites. More information at <https://www.greatplainsumc.org/metourmissioneducationtour>

Disaster Response Ministry- Make plans now to become a part of our Great Plains United Methodist Conference Disaster Response Ministry. Training April 5th at Grand Island Trinity UMC. Sign up at <https://gp-reg.brapp.com/ERTGrandIsland040525>

Pray-grounds multiplying- Parents wanting to keep an eye on their children during worship are being accommodated in some Dakotas Conference churches by installing "Pray-grounds." Read more at <https://www.dakotasumc.org/news/pray-grounds-engage-children-during-worship>.

Pillowcase Project brings comfort to cancer patients- three members of Oakdale United Methodist Church established the Pillowcase Project donating bright, cheery pillowcases to the UMASS Pediatric Oncology Unit. Read more at <https://www.neumc.org/blogdetail/pillowcase-project-brings-comfort-to-pediatric-cancer-patients-18755357>

Hurricane Helene recovery in N.C.- UMC Early Response Teams have been working since October 8th. Read more at <https://new.express.adobe.com/webpage/lmt48fXz50jDE>





Sunday

Worship time 10:00 a.m.

Adult Bible Study

Sunday morning 9:00 am

Children's Education

Children's Church
-during Worship service

Nursing Home services

On Sunday, December 22nd, Pastor Nicole will visit both Brookefield and Matelyn in St. Paul to do Christmas worship services. Anyone is invited *and encouraged* to come to these services. These services will take place at Matelyn at 5:45 p.m. and Brookfield at 6:30 p.m.



Dec 2	Lory Thomsen	Dec 14	Charlene Craig
Dec 3	Don Lukasiewicz	Dec 16	Dave Harrington
Dec 4	Deb Rasmussen	Dec 19	Susan Ross
Dec 4	Ursula Sorlie	Dec 20	Mac Killinger
Dec 5	Brenda Starkey	Dec 22	Dawson Fox
Dec 10	Carrie Thomas	Dec 24	Jeremiah Eck
Dec 11	Damon Poss	Dec 24	Vincent Christensen
Dec 13	Jazmyne Spilinek	Dec 29	Deb Wells
Dec 14	Layla Thompson		

Happy Anniversary

Dec 14	Mike & Liz Rawlings
Dec 21	Mark & Angela Feeney
Dec 28	Arlan & Kori Johnson



United Methodist Church of St. Paul
MISSION STATEMENT

'Making and Nurturing Disciples'

Did you know.....

The UWF is still collecting
Best Choice
brand labels (bar codes)?

These are sent in for reimbursement after a certain amount has been reached. This helps the UWF in their ministry throughout the year. Please consider cutting out and donating labels for this cause. There is a basket in the Narthex of the church to place these.

The UWF ladies thank you!

Online Giving

You now have the option to give online to the church! If you go to our website

stpaulneunitedmethodistchurch.com, there is an option on the menu bar to 'Give Online'. Once clicking on this button it will redirect you to a secure site in which you can enter in your information and give the amount you are interested in giving. This can be a one time offering or you may set up a recurring amount.



FOOD PANTRY

Please consider donating items for the Howard Greeley Food pantry.



The **Food Pantry** here in St. Paul is always looking for food donations. Please help us stock the shelves. Any food or paper item is accepted but these items are in high demand every month.

Hamburger Helper	Pudding
Brownie mixes	Jello
Cookies	Canned fruit- any kind
Bar Soap	Cereal
Pork and Beans	Frosting
Crackers (Salad & Soup- Saltines)	
Laundry Soap	Shampoo/Conditioner
Toothbrushes/Toothpaste	Toilet Tissue
Flour	Ketchup/Mustard
Juice-any kind	Pie Crusts
Mayo	Pancake Mix/Syrup
Spaghetti Sauce	
Salad Dressings (Ranch/Dorothy Lynch)	
Dish Soap	

Food Pantry

The United Methodist Church is responsible for operating the Food Pantry every third Saturday from 9-11 am. If you could volunteer to help any one of these Saturdays, it would be greatly appreciated.

December 21st is the next work date.

Precautions are taken to insure the health and protection of both the worker and the consumer.

Thank you, Theda Van Horn

Food Pantry hours

Saturday	Tuesday
9:00-11:00 am	4:00-6:00 pm

February is the month for United Methodist Church to donate to the Food Pantry.



UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH

The meeting was opened by Charlene Craig, Co-chair at 1:30 PM on November 12th.

Attending where Marilyn, Jackie, Charlene, Deb, Cleo, Cheryl, Ursula and Darla.

Devotions given by Marilyn Wall.

Purpose read by all.

Minutes read by Ursula and approved without correction.

Treasurer's report given by Jackie: BOH \$1170.68

Thank offering given today. Pledge now to Central NE for \$125 paid up for year.

After expenses \$645.68 left - table what to do with fund.

Correspondence: Janelle Erb, District President letter requesting officer updates by December 10th. Carol will send the information. About Prayer and Self-denial for UWF. Press release: The US must support policies that contribute to human flourishing rather than human suffering. Ie: The Humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Press release: Native American International Caucus of UMC encouraged that they have finally been heard and the effort will be made to bring their children home. UWF statement on presidential election focuses on rights and justice for all.

New Business: New membership booklet completed by Carol and Deb. Thank you to the both of you. Officer installment will take place when all new officers are in place.

Mary Ann has resigned as Co-Secretary.

Funeral Flowers Committee, Deb and Ursula, no new information. Outreach committee report, Darla and Cheryl. Need to further clarify Church/UWF outreach. Mentioned were ideas for Card Ministry, Meal ministry, New membership packets, Prayer shawl ministry, Evening group of UWF, Caregiver support group, Children's Bibles for new babies, Visitor packets. Motion made to approve and fund Card ministry and Bibles for new babies by Cheryl and seconded by Charlene. Approved by all.

All Faiths Dinner- This year will be hosted by Catholic Church women. Details not available yet. Discuss the possibility that we would bring salads and a door prize.

Plans for next meeting

December 10th, 2024 - lunch at The Den at 11:30 AM and a meeting to follow. Deb will give devotions.

Bring Christmas cookies if you want to.

Lunch served by Charlene after the meeting.

Secretary, Ursula Sorlie

United Women in Faith (UMW)

The next meeting of the
UWF will be on
**December 10th at 11:30pm at The
Den. Lunch then meeting to follow.**
All ladies are welcome!



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