



# United Methodist Church January



2026

[stpaulneunitedmethodistchurch.com](http://stpaulneunitedmethodistchurch.com)

**Office hours**  
**Tues-Thurs**  
**9am –3:00 pm**  
**754-4247**

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## 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

UMM  
Jeremiah Eck

UWF  
Deb Wells

Education  
Nancy Harrington

Happy New Year! One of the things I love at the beginning of the new year is a new planner or calendar. I love the endless possibilities that it presents. The new experiences, the potential for growth, the untold blessings that lie ahead. I also like the processes of filling it in. Moving the birthdays and anniversaries of loved ones over and taking the time to think about them, even if for just a moment. Penciling in the holidays and special events, the seasons of the church year and family life. Even marking the mundane tasks— doctor’s appointments, dental cleanings, changing the furnace filter— holds a reminder of life. Then, looking at the remaining time and planning— planning for church life, connecting with others—in the midst of the “empty” space that remains.

This week, Jeremiah and I received a text message from a dear friend, one of our chosen family members. They shared that they were going over their blank 2026 calendar, planning their sermon schedule, and making various commitments, including those from their family, day job, scout troop, daughter’s high school events, and even the farm. As they reflected on the tasks, they realized that they had neglected to carve out time for friendship. Reading this message, I couldn’t help but feel a twinge of recognition, not exactly guilt, but a deep understanding that I, too, struggle to prioritize friendship in my life.

However, it’s not just friendship that we often overlook. We get so focused on the busy, necessary aspects of our lives that we forget to make time for other equally important but not necessarily “as pressing” things. Relationships, friendships, health, rest, faith, and more can easily be pushed aside in the pursuit of our daily routines and commitments. So, what are you carving out time for as you look at 2026? Are you carving out time for worship, study, or prayer? Are you carving out time to nurture relationships? Are you carving out time to serve others? Are you filling the empty spots on your calendar with things that nurture your spirit or rest your body and mind?

Our worship theme beginning January 11th is Reset. This is not about making New Year’s Resolutions. According to an article in Lead Read Today by Ohio State University, research suggests that only 9% of Americans who make resolutions complete them. In fact, the article reveals that 23% of people quit their resolutions by the end of the first week, and 43% quit by the end of January. I’ve often heard that by February’s end, 80% of people have given up. When I think of a reset, I envision how we prioritize the things we are already doing and how we put things back into perspective. What would you like to reset in 2026?

As we move into 2026, I would like to leave you with a prayer.

I found the following prayer from 1900 for a new year in

Every Moment Holy (Volume III):

The Work of the People by Douglas Kaine McKelvey:

O Unchanging God,  
Let us pass through this new year  
with faithful hearts,  
that we might in all things  
please your loving eyes

Blessings, Pastor Nicole



# January

4th	Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am-Rev. Dorteia Fairbanks guest Pastor Children's Church during Worship Communion	18th	Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Children's Church during Worship Nursing Home services: Brookefield 1:30pm Matelyn 2:30pm Human Relations Day (Special offering)
7th	Youth Group 6:30 pm	20th	UWF meeting 1:30pm
8th	Community Office Hours— Bedhead 8am-11am	21st	Youth Group 6:30 pm
11th	Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Children's Church during Worship	22nd	Community Office Hours— Bedhead 8am-11am
13th	Fairbanks Home Group 11am	25th	Adult Sunday School 9 am Worship 10 am Children's Church during Worship
14th	Prayer Group 11am Youth Group 6:30 pm	28th	Prayer Group 11am Youth Group 6:30 pm
15th	Community Office Hours— Bedhead 8am-11am	29th	Community Office Hours— Bedhead 8am-11am
17th	UMC helps at Food Pantry 9-11am		

## Intergenerational No Rehearse Christmas Program

The Christmas Program for 2025 was held on December 7th during the 10am Worship service. This was a no rehearse play, and everyone in Worship that day had a chance to participate. It was an enjoyable and easy way to celebrate the Advent season. A thanks to all those who helped pull it together for a fun time had by all!



*Above: Those in attendance for the Dec. 7th 2025 Christmas Program*

### Want to join the Prayer Chain?

If you would be interested in joining the Prayer Chain, please let Jackie Cook or the church office know.

We need you!

Please read on page 5 to find out the details of how it works!

### Prayer Group

Our prayer group meets twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 11am to pray over the prayer requests from Sunday, the teacher prayer list, and other prayer requests we receive. We may use different prayer practices as we do this.

We would love to have you join us!



No January Anniverseries

<b>Jan 1</b>	Claude Sorlie	<b>Jan 13</b>	Emily Christensen
<b>Jan 2</b>	Russ Swigart	<b>Jan 14</b>	Ashley Meyer
<b>Jan 5</b>	Diane Johnson	<b>Jan 14</b>	Jeff Vogel
<b>Jan 10</b>	Austin Starkey	<b>Jan 18</b>	Martha Voigt
<b>Jan 11</b>	Tim Ross	<b>Jan 19</b>	Anthony Esquitin
<b>Jan 12</b>	Becky Schwenk	<b>Jan 24</b>	Cole Eck

**United Methodist Church of St. Paul**  
**MISSION STATEMENT**  
*'Making and Nurturing Disciples'*



## Confirmation-

### Parent meeting sometime the end of January!

Do you have youth that are ready for confirmation? I am working to plan Confirmation for the Winter/Spring of 2026. At least 4 students enhances the Confirmation experience, though it can be done with fewer.

Confirmation is an opportunity for youth to gather with their peers, adult leaders, and their pastor and learn about their faith. On Confirmation Sunday, those who have not previously been baptized will be baptized. Those who have previously been baptized will also make a public acceptance of their faith by answering the same questions for themselves that their parents answered at their baptism. They will all take the same vows of membership in the United Methodist Church and the local congregation that all who join are asked.

Confirmation typically takes place at or around 6th grade, but according to denominational guidelines, readiness for confirmation is “not so much about a chronological age, but rather about one’s readiness to assume the vows of professing membership.”

So, if you have a youth that, as a parent, you believe is ready for confirmation, let Pastor Nicole know and/or sign them up at the following link:

<https://fs30.formsite.com/pastornicschwartz/PFUMCCConfirmation26/index>

## December Attendance

December 7th:	56 In-person 38 Views/YouTube
December 14th:	29 In-person 16 Views/YouTube
December 21st:	43 In-person 27 Views/YouTube
December 21st: Blue Christmas	18 In-person 19 Views/YouTube
December 24th: <i>Christmas Eve Service</i>	140 In-person 14 Views/YouTube
December 28th:	25 In-person 24 Views/YouTube

## December Offering Totals

December 7th:	\$9,166
December 14th:	\$6,080
December 21st: <i>10 am service</i>	\$1,315
December 24th:: <i>Christmas Eve-</i> Offering goes to Howard County Food Pantry	\$924
December 28th:	\$1,205

## 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	750-4319	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 Pearson	308-219-0060
Theda Van Horn	754-4541	Cherri & Scott Klinginsmith	750-0615	Brenda Starkey	750-7967
Cleo Edwards	754-4853	Charlotte Rasmussen	308-968-3375	Becky Schwenk	750-4590
Nancy OR Mike McCarthy	750-2117-Nancy (775)-830-9521 -Mike	Susan Hartley	(641)-485-7349	Lory Thomsen	754-4286
Sheila Studley	750-6973	Robyn Dvoracek	754-8468		

Thank  
you!

From Darla, our Worship Committee Chairperson:  
*The Christmas season has passed as we observed Epiphany on Tuesday, Jan 6<sup>th</sup>. I thank all those who helped out by putting the Christmas decorations away for another year. Let us remember to keep the reason for the season in our hearts all year long. Jesus is the Greatest gift of all.*

## Christmas Cheer, What a Year!

Christmas Cheer 2025 was a huge success and our church family was part of that success story. I'd love to thank all of you personally but that is impossible. This year 22 families were helped with gifts purchased for 56 children. A total of 94 people were impacted by your generosity! Each family receives a gift card from Hometown Market, a ham and other donated food items. Also children under age 18 receive a gift and all receive hats, gloves mittens, or socks. *Thank you, thank you, thank you!*

-Christmas Cheer Committee



*Above: Members of the Christmas Cheer Committee readying the gifts for distribution day.*

# United Women of Faith

## Meeting minutes

The United Methodist Women met on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. President Deb Wells called the meeting to order. Those present were Deb Wells, Carol Phillips, Mary Ann Rickertsen, Dorthea Fairbanks, Theda VanH orn, Cheryl Yoder, Mary Pearson, Darla Voigt and guest Sally Heusinkvelt.

Prayers concerns for: the Goldfish family, Ryker Watt, Claude Sorlie, Dave and Connie Snow, Linda Schmader, Kayla, Paul and Toni Bentz, the Matt Hawley's family, Gary and Charlene Craig.

Members read the Purpose of the organization.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

No treasurer's report available.

**Correspondence:** Cards of support sent to Mary Ann – (birthday), Connie and Dave Snow – (healing). Epworth Village – Request for monetary support . Thank you notes: Christmas Cheer Committee, Howard Greeley Food Pantry Board, a thank you from the Glenda Glines Family.

**Old Business:** Deb Well reported on the All Faiths Luncheon which was held on December 3rd. Our organization provided Hormel 81 ham. Approximately ninety people attended and enjoyed this event.

**New Business:** The group will be hosting the December 21<sup>st</sup> fellowship time after church.

The group was reminded of future church activities:

UMC will be helping at the Food Pantry on December 20<sup>th</sup> from 9 to 11. A request for additional help was made to support the Food Pantry during distribution hours. This food assists those in our communities that have a need for food.

On Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup> Pastor Nicole will be conducting a service for the residents at Brookfield beginning at 1:30. Later that afternoon, she will be providing a service for the residents of Matelyn beginning at 2:30.

Pastor encouraged others to attend or serve as a readers at one of those services.

Our Church will have a Blue Christmas service on December 21<sup>st</sup> beginning at 5:30.

The Christmas Eve candlelight service will be on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30.

Leadership reminded us of monthly gatherings that will continue in the new year. That included the Prayer Group which is held every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays. We were also reminded of the Community Office Hours which are held every Thursday at Bedhead from 8:00-11:00 a.m.

Deb Wells entertained us with a Christmas Trivia game. Dorthea had prepared a document that explained how the song: "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was related to the Christmas Story. We feasted on Christmas goodies provided by the group.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 1:30. Theda will prepare a devotion for the day. Darla will plan a lesson. Mary will prepare the lunch for the group.

We celebrated the December birthdays of both Charlene and Deb's.

Acting Secretary

Darla Voigt



### United Women in Faith (UMW)

The next meeting of the  
UWF will be on

**January 20th at 1:30pm.**

All ladies are welcome!



## ***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](http://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.

## **Teacher's Prayers**

At St. Paul United Methodist Church, we have made a commitment to our local schools. As we have done in the past, we will start our weekly prayers for the teachers and school staff for the school year.

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:**

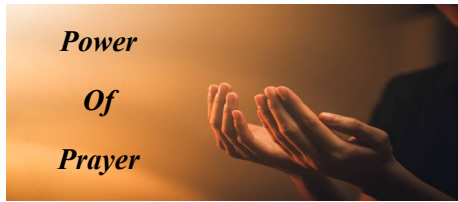
**Jan 4**– Tamie Tomlinson, Melody Becker, Daylene Fox, Jenna Wilshusen, Mackenzie Loofe

**Jan 11** – Lacey Bowder, Kylie Mohling, Kellie Seward, Jacquelyn Fitzgerald, Kali Volk, Allyson Wilson

**Jan 18**– Stephanie Palacz, Chris Thede, Rayann Wales, Janet Stamp, Ashley Weber, Rebecca Syring, Brenda Thompson

**Jan 25**– Jordyn Lindsay, Tonya Anderson, Elaine McCarty, Ashley Lynch, Chris Elstermeier, Rochelle Stepanek

## Churches Praying for Churches



Every year each church receives a list of UMC churches to pray over each week. Please join us in lifting these churches up in prayer this month.

**Jan. 4th**— Our Conference

**Jan. 11th**— Bishop

**Jan. 18th**— DS's

**Jan. 25th**— Ericson

## Sunday



**Worship time**  
10:00 a.m.

### Adult Bible Study

Sunday morning 9:00 am

### Children's Education

Children's Church  
-during Worship service



## 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.

Fresh Meats	Pork & Beans
Brownie mixes	Pudding
Jelly	Syrup
Cookies	Shampoo/Conditioner
Cereal	Spaghetti sauce
Crackers (Salad & Soup)	Toilet paper
Dish soap	Toothpaste
Flour	Canned fruit
Hamburger Helper	Salad Dressing- (Ranch, Dorothy Lynch)
Jello	Frosting/Cake Mixes
Ketchup/Mustard	Mayo
Laundry soap-small bottles	Pancake mix

### **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.

**January 17th** 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

<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>
<b>9:00-11:00 am</b>	<b>4:00-6:00 pm</b>

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



**United Methodist Church**  
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# January

