

St. Paul's Happenings

A Publication of St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Manheim

December 2025/January 2026

Making a Difference Through the Love of Christ – to Know God, Love God & Serve God

Our Source of Light

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, when the wise men (who were Gentiles) came to worship Jesus and bring him gifts. During the church-year season of Epiphany, we remember that God's Son is the Light of the whole world.

Ponder the gifts of Epiphany with these two reflections, written centuries apart:

Your light, dear God, surpasses all other light, because all light comes from you. Your fire surpasses all fire, because your fire alone burns without destroying. The flames of your fire reach into the soul, consuming the sin and selfishness that lie there. But far from damaging the soul, your fire sets it ablaze with love. What moved you to enlighten me with your truth? The fire of your love was the reason. You loved me so much that you could not bear to see me confused and perplexed. Can I ever repay the burning love which you have given me? No, because I have nothing of my own to give. Yet you assure me that the love which you put into my soul is repayment enough. You desire only the joy of seeing me receiving your gift. What more perfect Father could there be!

—Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)

Epiphany beckons us to come to the light of Jesus Christ. Epiphany calls us to stare into that light until our inner darkness is fully expunged. Epiphany then sends us out into a dark and weary world as women and men with shining faces, until we say with the apostle Paul, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [see 2 Corinthians 4:6].

—Jason Gaboury, campus minister in New York City

From the January 2024 edition of The Newsletter



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Advent Begins a New Church Year

Advent began on Sunday, November 30, 2025 and it begins a whole new church year. The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! It also begins with readings from Isaiah, the apostle Paul; and the gospel lessons will focus on St. Matthew for the most of the coming year. The themes of advent are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us as we celebrate Holy Communion in worship, in silent reflection and in works of love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us. Be sure to look for the new in worship as well.

On Sunday, December 21, there will be an Anointing Worship Service held during regular worship @ 9:30 am for those who may be experiencing a "Blue Christmas."

Blue is the color for Hope and because many people are coping with loss at Christmas-time, there will be a time during worship for anyone who feels they are grieving, lonely or hurting to come forward to be anointed in the hope and comfort of Christ's love.

If you or someone you know is suffering through a loss or hard time in their lives, please feel free to attend this meaningful worship service.



Coffee Hour

Feel free to enjoy a delicious cup of Whiff Roasters coffee during worship! After worship, you'll have a chance to grab some tasty treats, and mingle and get to know a great group of people that make up the heart of St. Paul's. You'll even have a chance to chat with Pastor Bill Long.

December & January Scripture Readings

Sunday, December 7 – Advent 2: Isaiah 11: 1-10/Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19/Romans 15: 4-13/St. Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 14 – Advent 3: Isaiah 35:1-10/Psalm 146:5-10/James 5:7-10/St. Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 21 – Advent 4: Isaiah 7:10-16/Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19/Romans 1:1-7/St. Matthew 1:18-25

Wednesday, December 24 – Christmas Eve: Isaiah 9:2-7/Psalm 96/Titus 2:11-14/St. Luke 2:1-20

Sunday, December 28 – Christmas 1: Isaiah 63:7-9/Psalm 148/Hebrews 2:10-18/St. Matthew 2:13-23

Sunday, January 4 – Christmas 2: Jeremiah 31:7-14/Psalm 147:12-20/Ephesians 1:3-14/St. John 1:1-18

Sunday, January 11 – The Baptism of Our Lord: Isaiah 42:1-9/Psalm 29/Acts 10:34-43/St. Matthew 3:13-17

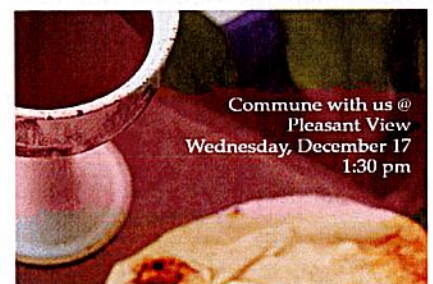
Sunday, January 18 – Epiphany 2: Isaiah 49:1-7/Psalm 40:1-11/1 Corinthians 1:1-9/St. John 1:29-42

Sunday, January 25 – Epiphany 3: Isaiah 9:1-4/psalm 27:1, 4-9/1 Corinthians 1:10-18/St. Matthew 4:12-23

Holy Communion

The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated every Sunday in December and January. Communion Services will also be held at Pleasant View Retirement Community on **Wednesdays, December 17 and January 21 @ 1:30 pm @ Hoffer Auditorium.**

If you worship from home and need communion elements, please contact the church office at 717.665.2447.



Commune with us @
Pleasant View
Wednesday, December 17
1:30 pm

Holiday & Winter Happenings @ St. Paul's

Hebrews Bible Study

Bible Study will continue studying Hebrews on Wednesday evenings @ 6:30 pm in Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Decorating Party

Get ready for the season and help decorate the church on Friday, December 5 @ 5 pm. We'll begin with hot soup, crusty bread, and lots of other goodies and then move into preparing for the Advent/Christmas season together!

Breakfast with Santa

Bring your kids, grandkids, neighbors and friends and experience the wonders of the Season on Saturday, December 6 from 8:30-10 am. Enjoy a delicious FREE pancake and sausage breakfast, a chance to visit with Santa to share your wish list and get photos too. There's a game and a craft too, and all children receive a goody bag.

Christmas Eve Worship

Celebrate the Birth of Our Lord on Wednesday, December 24 @ 7 pm or 11 pm. Both services will feature candlelighting, and lessons and carols of the season. The 11 pm will feature Holy Communion as well. Come home to St. Paul's this Christmas!

Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner

We'll start the new year right on Sunday, January 4, 2026! We'll begin worship @ 11 am followed by a Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner. After the dinner, we'll De-Decorate and prepare for the season of Epiphany. Be sure to sign up on the table outside the Sanctuary if you plan to attend the dinner. Takeouts will be available to homebound members and friends of St. Paul's – please RSVP @ 717.665.2447 by Wed. Dec. 31, 2025.

Gift Card Fundraiser

Gift Cards will be available for purchase on Sundays, December 7 & 14 – order your cards one week, and receive them the next week! Order forms are available on the table outside the church office or on the large bulletin board on the 1st floor. Proceeds benefit St. Paul's Mission Team.

Check Out Our Website

For the latest info, updates to recent events, or cancellations or delays due to weather, please visit our website found at www.stpaulsuccmanheim.org.

Help us Decorate for

CHRISTMAS

Friday, Dec. 5

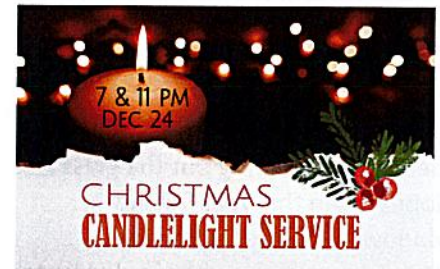
@ 5 pm

Enjoy a great meal first and then experience the sights and sounds of the season as we prepare the church for Advent & Christmas!

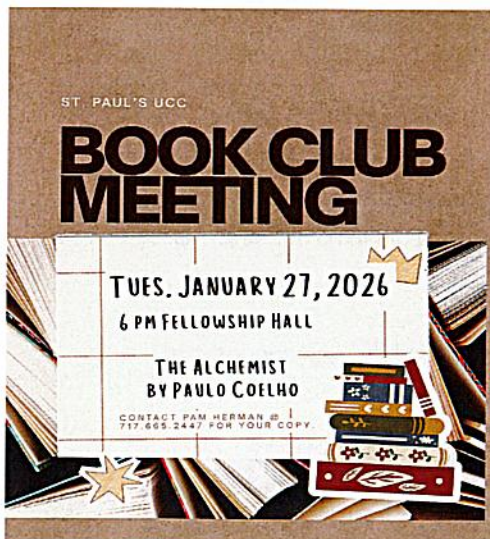


Bring your little ones for a delightful morning filled with joy and wonder.

Saturday, December 6 from 8:30-10 am
St. Paul's UCC - 50 N. Main St. Manheim



More Events – Before & After the Holidays



The Fellowship Breakfast will be held in December on Thursday, December 18 and the January breakfast will be held on Thursday, January 22, both @ 8:30 am @ Kountry Kitchen Family Restaurant in Manheim. Please RSVP to Claire Reed at 717.951.4325 by the Monday before the breakfast.

FREE Community Breakfast: The FREE Community Breakfast will return to its regular schedule on Saturday, January 7, 2026 from 8:30-10 am. On the menu is Sausage gravy & biscuits or breakfast egg casserole. Contact Erica Hoffman @ 717.203.1449 ejhoffman826@gmail.com for info or to help out.

Book Club: Get your copy of *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho about a shepherd boy who travels from Spain to Egypt in search of buried treasures in the pyramids. We'll meet to discuss on Tuesday, January 27 @ 6 pm in Fellowship Hall.



Women's Fellowship

Once again, you have come through for Women's Fellowship! Thank you to all who served at the Veteran's dinner and gave gift cards for the residents of our local UCC Homes. Because of you, our local veterans and the residents of our UCC Homes enjoyed either a great meal or will enjoy their Christmas this year!

Decorating with creches will look a bit different this year. Kathy Frey and friends plan to bring out the glass globes again this year for the windowsills in the Sanctuary. Therefore, anyone who would like to share their family creche, are welcome to do so in the windowsills of Fellowship Hall where they will be seen by all who attend the Breakfast with Santa on December 6.

Due to the winter weather, we ladies will not meet again until March 2026.

In His Love at Christmas and Always,
June Smith & Dottie Drumheller

Mission of the Month

The December Mission of the Month is the Manheim Ministerium Assistance Fund, which helps those in our community in need of transportation, housing, medical, or other assistance. Help our neighbors in need by using your December special envelope and together we'll make a difference!

The January Mission of the Month is UCC Homes, which provides gracious retirement living which includes all types of care for people of all faiths and life experiences. Please use your January special envelopes to support the ministry of our local UCC Homes.

Food Pantry Update

In October, 177 total households were served or 552 total individuals. New Households served were 13 or 43 new individuals.

Third quarter giving from St. Paul's equaled 53.81 lbs. of donated food. Thank you for your continued support of the Manheim Central Food Pantry.

Please be sure your donations



are not expired, opened, or used.

Current items needed are:

Diapers, applesauce, beef stew, canned chili, canned beets, rice sides and plastic or reusable grocery bags.

Contact is Ruth Ellen Brown at 717.6654.1097 or drop off non-perishables in our 1st floor hallway near the kitchen.

Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, be sure to call the church office at 717.665.2447 (after 8 am on Sundays) for service or event changes or cancellations. Postings will also be on WGAL, WGAL.com and our website at stpaulsuccmanheim.org.

Sermons are available online on our website as well.

Mission Team Going to Deep Roots in 2026!

Save the Date: The Mission Team is once again planning a trip to Deep Roots in Earleville, MD leaving on Wednesday, June 17 and returning home on Saturday, June 20, 2026. Deep Roots is a farm used as a shelter for those families experiencing homelessness in the Maryland area. Families are mentored and receive needed services to support their return to stable employment and housing situations before leaving Deep Roots. This is a great opportunity to serve God – look for a planning meeting in late April. Contact Erica Hoffman at 717.203.1449 or ejhoffman826@gmail.com for more information.

Thank You from Deep Roots: Thank you for your very generous donations of food for 45 people in July. Your support and thoughtfulness means so much to our families and staff. Peace from the folks at Deep Roots

For more information on Deep Roots, go to www.deeprootsinc.org.



Council Highlights

Church Council met on Tuesday, November 18, 2025. Below are highlights of that meeting. Please note that these highlights are shared before the minutes are approved by council at their next meeting, when corrections to details may occur.

Endowment Fund is up \$55,000 in value for the year to date.

Treasurer's Report:

Benevolence: \$1,546 was received for the October Mission of the Month, which was Church World Services Blanket Appeal. OCWM giving was \$720 in October.

Operating: \$8,334 was received in October for current operating expenses.

Capital: \$1,195 was received in October for the capital fund.

Pastor's Report:

- A Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner will be served on Sunday, January 4 following the 11 am worship service. See more on page 3 of this newsletter for more info. Meals will also be distributed to some of St. Paul's homebound members as well.

Committee Reports:

- New Voices: see written report.
 - Property Board
- The front sidewalk project has been

completed; the concrete work at the back of the church for the handicap accessible ramp will not be completed now until Spring 2026. The elevator has been repaired and received a good inspection report. An upstairs window blew in during a recent wind storm, but has now been repaired. Further inspection showed other windows need some maintenance and that is occurring.

Old Business:

- Signers for the rental property settlement were appointed.

New Business:

- First Thursdays have been canceled by the Manheim Chamber of Commerce.
- A new process for distributing funds to Vanguard (Endowment Fund) was adopted.
- New checking accounts are being considered to save money on fees.
- Council received and accepted a letter of resignation from John Degler, Choir Director. He will be honored on Dec. 7. Council is prayerfully considering next steps for music ministry.
- The 2026 proposed budget was approved by Council to go to the congregation for approval on Sunday, December 14.

Next meeting date is Tuesday, December 16, 2025 @ 6 pm.



Women's Retreat

This year, women from St. Paul's are welcome to be part of Camp Hebron's annual Women's Retreat complete with rest, fellowship, encouragement, as we engage in worship, teachings and prayer. All ladies are welcome – easy access lodging and meals are included with activities like crafts, games and hikes and a keynote speaker as well. There is a cost.

The dates are Friday, February 20 @ 6 pm-Sunday, February 22 @ 1 pm.

If interested in attending, enlist your friends and go to Camp Hebron's website to register at:

<https://www.camphebron.org/events-1/womens-retreat-2026>

For more info, contact Pam Herman @ 717.665.2447 or stpaulsmanheim@ptd.net



Budget Meeting & Giving Information



The proposed budget for 2026 was presented to Church Council at their November meeting and approved, and a **Congregational Meeting has been set for Sunday, December 14, 2025** following worship for congregational approval. Thank you for your continued support of the ministry here at St. Paul's!

To receive giving envelopes, change to direct withdrawal or if you no longer need giving envelopes, please contact the church office at 717.665.2447/stpaulsmanheim@ptd.net.

New Giving Envelopes for 2026 are now available outside the church office – please be sure to pick yours up.

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00pm Property Board	2	3 6:30pm Bible Study	4 9:00am Simply Yoga 7:00pm AA @ Zion Lutheran 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	5 5:00pm Decorating Night	6 8:30am Breakfast with Santa
7 Advent 2 9:00am Prayer 9:30am One Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	8	9	10 6:30pm Bible Study	11 9:00am Simply Yoga 7:00pm AA @ Zion Lutheran 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	12	13
14 Advent 3 9:00am Prayer 9:30am One Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	15	16 6:00pm Church Council	17 1:30pm Communion @ Pleasant View 6:30pm Bible Study	18 8:30am Fellowship Breakfast @ Kountry Kitchen 7:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm AA @ Zion Lutheran	19	20
21 Advent 4 9:00am Prayer 9:30am One Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 11:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 	25 Christmas Day - Office Closed 7:00pm AA @ Zion Lutheran	26	27
28 Christmas I 9:00am Prayer 9:30am One Worship 10:30am Coffee Hour	29	30	31			

January 2026

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

JANUARY

2026

1
New Year's Day -
Office Closed
7:00pm AA @ Zion
Lutheran

2

3

4
Christmas 2
11:00am One Worship
12:00pm Pork &
Sauerkraut Dinner &
DeDecorating

5
7:00pm Property
Board

6
Epiphany



7
6:30pm Bible Study

8
9:00am Simply Yoga
7:00pm AA @ Zion
Lutheran
7:00pm Bell Choir
Rehearsal

9

10

11
Baptism of Our Lord
9:00am Prayer
9:30am One Worship
10:30am Coffee Hour

12
6:00pm New Voices
Vision Team Meeting

13

14
6:30pm Bible Study

15
9:00am Simply Yoga
7:00pm Bell Choir
Rehearsal
7:00pm AA @ Zion
Lutheran

16

17
8:30am FREE
Community
Breakfast

18
Epiphany 2
9:00am Prayer
9:30am One Worship
10:30am Coffee Hour

19
Martin Luther King Jr.
Day

20
6:00pm Church Council

21
1:30pm Communion @
Pleasant View
6:30pm Bible Study

22
8:30am Fellowship
Breakfast @ Kountry
Kitchen
9:00am Simply Yoga
7:00pm Bell Choir
Rehearsal
7:00pm AA @ Zion
Lutheran

23

24

25
Epiphany 3
9:00am Prayer
9:30am One Worship
10:30am
Congregational
Meeting
11:30am Coffee Hour

26

27

28
6:30pm Bible Study

29
9:00am Simply Yoga
7:00pm AA @ Zion
Lutheran
7:00pm Bell Choir
Rehearsal

30

31



WINTER

Anniversaries & Birthdays



Worship Attendance

Total attendance = those who worship in the Sanctuary, those in the nursery and those viewing the service online.

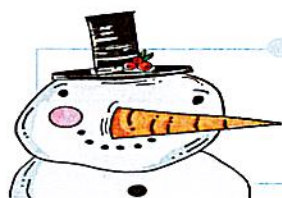
11/2 – 130 11/9 – 86 11/16 – 101
11/23 – 84

Christian Symbols

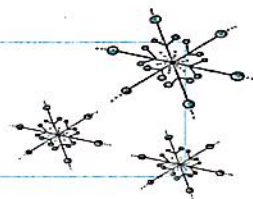


Poinsettia: The poinsettia (named for Joel Poinsett, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico who first brought the plant to America) is known in Mexico as la flor de la Nochebuena (flower of the Holy Night).

The poinsettia is also an ideal Christmas symbol because its leaves turn red when deprived of sunlight and its flowers (the red inner buds) bloom in December.



Hello winter



Requests for Prayer

For prayer requests, please contact Joan Hess at 717.665.4705. Our homebound members will remain on the list permanently as a reminder to keep these individuals wrapped in prayer and to remember them with cards, phone calls, and visits.

Alex & Trish Bairos	Nancy Gible	Jay Hess	Bev Hockenberry	Ava Hontz	Bridget Irons
Maybelle Martin	Jane Moyle	Richard Moyle & Lynne Shoemaker		Glen & Delores Mumma	
Joanna Schreiber	Eric Smeltz	Phyllis Smeltz	Donna Snavelly	Menno & Betty Lou Stoner	
Barry & Scott Christ*	Linda Coe*	Wyatt Dull*	Dr. Eugene Engle*	Jona Green*	Stephen H.*
Blakely Kling*	Rachel Martin*	Karen Miller*	Verdella Stauffer*	Teen Central & Bible2school kids/staff	
In the Military: Jessie Dutt & Ben Ryan					

Christmas Prayer: A True Gift

Dear Lord,

You have brought us to Christmastime once more. Help us not to get lost in the glitter and the glow, but to see the true glory of the birth of Your only begotten Son. Keep our hearts from clinging too tightly to parties, presents and decorations, and turn our eyes instead to Christ — who bears Your very image and brings us Your message of love and hope.

In the glorious name of Christ, we pray. Amen.



A Thank You Note



We would like to thank Pastor Bill for his visits and words of comfort following the tragic death of our beloved daughter, Stacy.

Also, thank you to the congregation for their cards and prayers.

- Jay & Glenna Bell

Communication Deadlines

St. Paul's Happenings is printed monthly except for the December/January and July/August combined issues.

The deadline to submit articles is the 3rd Sunday of the month before publication. **The February 2026 issue deadline is Sunday, January 18, 2026.** Bulletin announcements are due to the church office by Wednesday mornings @ 8 am.



St. Paul's Staff & Leaders

Staff:

Pastor – The Rev. Bill Long

Church Administrator – Pam Herman

Organist – June Smith

Chancel Choir Director – John Degler

Bell Choir Director – Jim Hoffman

Custodian – Mark Lowe

Kitchen Managers – Jerry Weller

Council:

Ministers – All Church Members

Karen Brandt – President

Danette Fair

Ron Forry

Mike Givler - Secretary

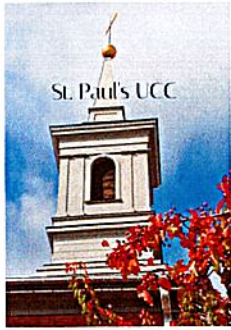
Gretchen Miller – Treasurer

Carolyn Peters – Vice President

J. D. Young

Non-voting Ex-Officio Member by Position:

The Rev. Bill Long



St. Paul's United Church of Christ

50 N. Main Street, P. O. Box 129

Manheim, PA 17545

Phone: 717.665.2447

www.StPaulsuccManheim.org



*Now may
the Lord of peace
himself give you
peace at all times
and in every way.
The Lord be with all of you.*

2 Thessalonians 3:16, NIV