



St. Paul Pages

St. Paul United Methodist Church

January 2023

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Miked Up

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in this city of David a Savior who is the Messiah (the Christ) the Lord.'" That's what the angel said to the shepherds.

Every time I've read this passage, it has brought me hope and inspiration. And it still does. Yet, there is something about this that makes me squirm. It moves me beyond joy to...well, I'm not sure yet. I'm still working it out.

Why did the angel have to say *you*? Why not "I bring good news of a great joy to Israel, or to those who will believe. Or even Behold, I have some bad news for your Roman oppressors?

Here's what I'm thinking: Christmas day, this long-awaited, colorful season, is more than angels, a star and a silent, holy night of some 2,000 years ago. More than time away from school and work and more time with family, wonderful as it all is. This is about a God who goes to specific people, at particular times, in particular places, to draft you and I into God purposes. As Bp. Will Willimon wrote in a Christmas sermon some thirty years ago, "The implication is that particular places like Nazareth and Bethlehem matter to God. Particular times like a census and tax time and travel matter. Specific people like Joseph and Mary, shepherds, Simeon and Anna matter to God."

Suddenly I began to see it throughout the Nativity.

The birth of Jesus shows the length that God went to.

Unfortunately, we live in a society where many people are skeptical about the nativity story, that it is a myth, a fairy tale like Jack and the Beanstalk.

God knows us by name.

In Matthew 1: *Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save His people from their sins.* See? Names are named. Purposes are put on the table. Later on, Luke calls out Caesar Augustus, the great-nephew and adopted son and heir of Julius Caesar. Whether we're part of doing God's work, or not, or even against it, God still knows our names.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:

The old has gone, the new is here!

~ 2 Corinthians 5:17

Gabriel: ***Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.*** Part of the Mary's terror is the realization that this messenger of God knows her by name. That she is being given an assignment. With that also comes comfort and care.

Since God knows us by name, then God knows what's inside: the things that make you you, the talents, the thought patterns. God knows the passions which stir in you to help others, compel you to love others. That means God also knows the war within you, the fight with yourself. For example, righteousness (right living according to Jesus' example) vs. whatever you want to label the opposite.

I think the lesson here is because God's move toward us is love, then our first move to one another also needs to be love. Not skepticism, not harshness, not suspicion, not cynicism. That challenges me.

All things really are possible with God.

I want you to hear this on this first day of Christmas! The birth of the Messiah tells us that all things really are possible with God. There are infinite possibilities. It moves us from generality to particularity. Generality: Ending food scarcity. Yes, we can work for better policies and distribution.

But Particularity: When you feed someone, see a face, and get to know their name.

Generality: Undo systemic racism in our schools and workplaces and employment.

Particularity: When you choose to call out "racist "jokes" or statements. If you are not comfortable or do not feel safe being confrontational, try to break down their thought process and ask questions. For example, *"That joke doesn't make sense to me, could you explain it?"*

It tells me that the Kingdom of God is now.

Not later in some galactic battle of good vs. evil, alignment of constellations, or the next world war. But here. Today. God's rule and reign begins now. The healing touch, the guiding light, the power to forgive and to forget. The awakening of faith in you and deeper faith.

As the author and host Dr. Amy-Jill Levine in our Advent study Light of the World said, ***"The Christmas story is only the start of something more glorious, and more wonderful, and more profound."***

So, I wish for you a Merry Christmas Day and season. May it not just be a general message to you, but a personal and particular message. Even if that message makes you squirm a little to know that God knows you by name, may it also bring you peace and comfort. May you know the length God went to offer you salvation and wholeness, and for this world in which we live.

I hope this may be the start of something new for you, and for the people who are on your heart today. Something more wonderful, more glorious than ever before. Thanks be to God. Amen.

~ Pastor Mike

³⁰ ***Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;***

³¹ ***but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.***

***They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.***

~ Isaiah 40:30-31

UWF (United Women in Faith)

During December, about a dozen UWF ladies enjoyed breakfast sandwiches, pastries, coffee and/ or hot chocolate at Brew Da Bean. It was a lovely time of fellowship. A great way to kick off the holiday season!

Treasurer Patsy Sparks has shared some really good news about our missions for 2022. St. Paul UWF donated a total of \$2,975.00 during this year! A great job of caring for our neighbors! We are proud of our commitment to helping others and sharing God's love.

Note: There will be no January meeting.

~ Karen Poff

January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Micah Kempernich—1	Blake Owen—12	Bruce Camper—22
Stephen Flippo—3	Don Pace—12	Mary Baker—24
Becky Pharis—5	Ashley Hartless—16	Judy Cole—25
Dubby Charlton, Jr.—6	Amy Vaughn—17	Joe Chase—26
Elliott Petry—6	Monica Cormier—18	Bill Meehan—28
Karen Adams—6	Larry Wrenn—19	Linda Akers—29
Eric Burlingame—7	Nancy Atkinson—19	Leslie Badillo—30
Jim Mattox—10	Mark Dobbins—20	Eric Hayes—31
David Linkous—10	Ryan Pharis—20	Jay Jones—31
Ashley Fant—10	Wayne Duckett—20	Brent McCombs—31
Brian Camper—11	Todd Fitch—21	Amanda Bailey—31
Bob Hockett—12	Vicki Chafin—21	
Jay Newman—12	Eliza Eaton—22	

**Others in January but no dates
available:**

Debbie Jackson
Kirk Keith
Faye Kennedy
Franklin Lawson

Victoria Long
Chris Simpson
Becky Wikle

Joe & Susan Chase—2
Bob & Karen Birchfield—24



**Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? Please call the church office at 540-382-2410.
Thank you!**

Finance Committee

Church family financial information

Your Finance Committee has not met since the last report but will meet on January 26. It is a pleasure to report that our investments are continuing to recover value. There will be more details in the year-end report, next month.

The Treasurer's report for November was just issued and shows that your giving to our ministries in that month increased over October (good for you and THANK YOU from all our ministries!!). It has not been possible to update the cash flow table yet, but we do have a shortage for the year to date in financial investment (giving) to our ministries versus their cost. Many make special gifts in December and we all need to pray about our giving and do what we can to close the financial gap, which was about \$42,000 at the end of November. I know you are seeing this in the first week of January but extra giving, even now, will be important. It will reduce the carryover burden on 2023. Again, **thank you** for your prayerful consideration!

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Stewardship

A function of the Finance Committee is our financial stewardship. At our last meeting, with suggestions from Pastor Mike, we voted support of a different financial stewardship education and focus for this year. As you have hopefully seen in recent bulletins, several of the early 2023 Wonderful Wednesday gatherings will be used to share questions, information, and expectations of each of us regarding stewardship, and especially financial stewardship. Please plan to take part in this, in whatever ways you can. We pray it will be a blessing to you, our church, and our ministries.

- Respectfully, Tom Bell, Chair



¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others,
as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.

~ 1 Peter 4:10

Wonderful Wednesdays

Wonderful Wednesdays Resume on January 11, 2023!

All are welcome! January's theme is Stewardship. Our schedule will be:

11:00 - 12:00 – Table Talk, morning group, Fellowship Hall.

6:00 - 6:45 – potluck meal. Feel free to bring food to share!

6:45 - 7:30 – Table Talk, evening group, Fellowship Hall.

(we will break out into additional rooms as needed.)

6:45 - 7:15 – children's choir rehearsal.

7:30 - 8:45 – chancel choir rehearsal.

Questions for our conversation will be in the Sunday bulletin to give you time to think through what you want to share. We will conclude our time with each table sharing some of their conversation.

Do you have a question or concern on an aspect of our stewardship, finances, or ministries that are important to your participation at St. Paul? Your Finance Committee would like to include them in our Table Talk conversations. To submit a question, please send it to Chairperson Tom Bell or any finance committee member: Pastor Mike, Russ Williams, Todd Fitch, Elliot Petry, Glenn Cochran, Chip Warren, Brad DeGeorge, Carol Slaughter, Patsy Sparks, and at-large members Sandra Chapin, Mike Gummer, Jim Mattox, and Lindsey Rease.

Finance Committee members will serve as facilitators.

~ Pastor Mike

Youth Sunday School

Youth Sunday School starts January 15th at 9:00AM. If you know any youth grades 6-12, please invite them to meet upstairs in the youth room starting the 15th.



**³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
~ 1 Peter 1:3**

January 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 In-Person- 10:00AM Livestream – 10:00AM Communion Sunday	2 Office Closed	3	4	5	6	7
8 In-Person- 10:00AM Livestream – 10:00AM	9 Preschool Back in Session NRV Homeschool String Orchestra Activity Building 1:00PM-3:00PM	10	11 Wonderful Wednesday Resumes 6:00PM-8:45PM Table Talk, morning session, 11:00AM-Noon Fellowship Hall Evening session, 6:45PM-7:30PM Fellowship Hall	12	13	14
15 In-Person- 10:00AM Livestream – 10:00AM	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Office Closed NRV Homeschool String Orchestra Activity Building 1:00PM-3:00PM	17	18 Wonderful Wednesday 6:00PM-8:45PM Table Talk, morning session, 11:00AM-Noon Fellowship Hall Evening session, 6:45PM-7:30PM Fellowship Hall	19	20	21
22 In-Person- 10:00AM Livestream – 10:00AM	23 NRV Homeschool String Orchestra Rehearsal in Fellowship Hall 1:00PM-3:00PM	24	25 Wonderful Wednesday 6:00PM-7:30PM Table Talk, morning session, 11:00AM-Noon Fellowship Hall Evening session, 6:45PM-8:45PM Fellowship Hall	26 Finance 7:00PM Resource Room	27 NRV Homeschool String Orchestra Concert in Fellowship Hall 6:00PM-8:00PM Concert at 7:00PM	28
29 In-Person- 10:00AM Livestream – 10:00AM	30 NRV Homeschool String Orchestra Activity Building 1:00PM-3:00PM	31				

United Methodist Men (UMM)

The United Methodist Men (UMM) met on December 15. The meeting began with our pitch-in dinner. There was homemade chili, beans with cornbread, breadsticks with dip, and more. As usual, there was plenty of it!

The holiday dinner project was discussed and two teams formed. Christmas Store personnel will be asked for families to be served.

Members were reminded of the wrapping booth 'take-down' and storage on the 27th. As soon as we learn the results from the wrapping coordinator from MCEAP, we'll share that news with the congregation.

Our participation in the "To Our House" (TOH) project again this year was discussed. TOH staff have asked that we provide residence for their guests for the first three weeks of March. We would only provide the meals for one of those weeks. It has been determined that the calendar is clear for us to do this and we are certain that, with congregational participation, the meal need can be met. Additional persons will be required, in order to meet the need for a daily overnight representative of the church to stay with the program coordinator and guests. More details on this will be shared with everyone, so please be considering taking part in this ministry.

We were updated on the progress of our Troop and Pack's status in securing a new Charter Organization. It was learned that everything was in place for them to have the VFW Charter. So, arrangements were made to provide the necessary documents to the BSA Council that indicate that the SPUMC UMM were releasing the units from Charter obligations with us. As has been strongly desired, some continued involvement with hosting various meetings and other activities (such as Scout Sunday) will continue (under a UMC authorized Facility Use Agreement (FUA)). Details of the FUA are being worked out with our Trustees.

Our next meeting will be on January 19 at 6:30pm. Remember, all men (members and friends) of the Church are invited to participate in these activities and the UMM fellowship. A pitch-in meal will be shared at the meeting. See you on January 19, 6:30pm, in the St Paul UMC Fellowship Hall!!

If you are not receiving UMM emails you can get on the list by sending an email to Tom Bell (tom72bell@aol.com). If you do not have access to email, call 540-382-8890 and leave your name and phone number.

-Tom Bell, UMM President

⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

~ Romans 5:5

Worship Attendance December 2022

	In-Person Adults	Nursery	Children's Church	Live Streaming	YouTube (Recorded)	Total Worship	Offerings General Budget
Dec 04	126	0	26	10	78	240	\$18,088
Dec 11	94	0	8	10	44	156	\$2,949
Dec 18	88	0	0	18	172	278	\$6,181
Dec 24	89	0	0	10	81	180	-
Dec 25	39	0	2	9	61	111	\$6,757

Pastor

Pastor Mike Derflinger
pastor@stpaulvaumc.org
540-631-4469

Administrative Assistant

Carol Slaughter
office@stpaulvaumc.org
540-382-2410

Organist/Director of Choirs (Children & Chancel)

Carolyn Mills
millsmusic@hotmail.com

Building & Grounds Manager

Matt Birchfield
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Custodian

Robin Raines
rainesrobin88@yahoo.com



Public page - <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulcburg>

Private page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulvaumc>



<https://www.youtube.com/c/StPaulUMCChristiansburgVA>

²² **Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.**

²³ **They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
~ Lamentations 3:22-23**

