



The Senior Pastor's Letter

Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens the wits of another.
Proverbs 27:17

The words of King Solomon from Proverbs 27:17 are considered to be one of scriptures most vivid images. You can almost hear the scrape of metal, see the sparks, feel the friction. Iron sharpening iron is not a gentle process. It's noisy, gritty, and intentional. And yet, it produces something better — something sharper, more useful, more capable of fulfilling its purpose.

In the same way, God uses people — our friends, our family, and our church community — to shape us into whom we are called to be. We do not grow in isolation. We grow in connection.

This verse is not simply about friendship. It is about mutual formation. We sharpen one another not through judgment or superiority, but through holy love, accountability, and encouragement.

Iron cannot sharpen iron from a distance. It must make contact. It must be willing to endure friction. In our spiritual lives, this means we need people who can speak truth to us — not harshly, but honestly. People who can say, "I see something in you that God wants to grow," or "I love you too much to let you stay stuck." These are the relationships that refine us. But sharpening is mutual. It is not one person fixing another. It is two or more people committed to growth, humility, and grace. It is a shared journey.

Small groups, class meetings, and covenant discipleship are foundational for us as United Methodists.

John Wesley knew that sermons inspire, but relationships transform. A sermon can stir your heart, but a friend can hold your feet to the fire of discipleship.

Iron sharpening iron means exposing the dull edges. It means admitting that we are not finished products. It means allowing others to see the parts of us that need work. Yes, this is uncomfortable. But spiritual growth rarely happens in comfort. When we open ourselves to others — our doubts, our struggles, our temptations, our hopes — we create space for God to work through community. Vulnerability is not weakness; it is the entrance to transformation.

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The Senior Pastor's Letter

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Sanctifying grace is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit shaping us into the likeness of Christ. Often, that grace comes through the people God places in our lives. A mentor who listens. A friend who challenges. A partner who encourages. A church member who prays. These are instruments of grace. These are the irons that sharpen us.

Sharpening is not about criticism. It is about love. Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:15 to "speak the truth in love." Truth without love wounds. Love without truth withholds growth. But truth spoken in love sharpens.

In a world that often chooses comfort over honesty or criticism over compassion, Proverbs 27:17 calls us to a different way. It calls us to build one another up, challenge one another gently, and encourage one another consistently. This is the heart of Christian community: love that shapes us into who God created us to be.

Iron does not sharpen itself. Someone must pick it up, position it, and apply pressure. Likewise, spiritual growth does not happen accidentally. It requires intentional relationships — people we choose to walk with, pray with, and grow with. Ask yourself:

- Who sharpens me?
- Whom am I sharpening?
- Where is God inviting me to deepen my relationships?

These questions matter because discipleship is not a solo project. It is a communal calling. When iron is sharpened, it becomes more effective. A dull blade can still function, but it requires more effort and produces less fruit. A sharpened blade is efficient, purposeful, and ready.

When we allow others to sharpen us, we become more effective disciples—more patient, more courageous, more compassionate, more like Christ. We become people who can love boldly, serve joyfully, lead courageously and witness to others with clarity and strength. When we sharpen others, we participate in God's work of forming disciples. We become instruments of grace.

This is the beauty of Proverbs 27:17: it is a call to mutual discipleship, mutual accountability, and mutual love.

Paz,
Pastor Sheridan

St. Paul's is on summer hours!

**We share one Sunday worship service at 10:30 AM.
Drop-in & Telephone Office Hours are
Tuesday-Thursday, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM.**

Staff and building access are available outside of these hours by appointment. Please contact us if you wish to see a specific person. Staff and clergy may be taking vacation days, attending meetings, or using remote-work/flex hours. Many groups are also on break! Please check with leaders to confirm meeting times.



Contact Us

SENIOR PASTOR

Rev. Sheridan Allmond
sallmond@stpaulsk.org
301-933-7933 ext. 101

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Rev. Joey Heath-Mason
joeyhm@stpaulsk.org
301-933-7933 ext. 103

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tpedersen@stpaulsk.org

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tfurman@stpaulsk.org
301-933-7933 ext. 106

Visit us online at
stpaulsk.org/community/
meet-the-staff

Office Hours

**Drop-in and Telephone Hours
Tuesday - Thursday
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

To meet with specific clergy or staff, or for access to the building outside these hours, please make an appointment. Individual availability varies!

St. Paul's is closed on federal holidays and the week between Christmas & New Year's.

Thoughts from Pastor Joey

Last month, I heard one of the annual criticisms of Pride Month, and I thought it would be helpful to share a few thoughts on the matter.

The critique usually goes something like this: *Isn't pride a sin?* After all, Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Philippians 2:3-4 also teaches, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others."

The general idea is that pride turns the self inward, while humility opens the heart to God and neighbor. And in that sense, I agree. Pride that elevates the self over others is spiritually dangerous and it is not the way of discipleship Christ teaches. Jesus says, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

The kind of falsely inflated self-importance, the pride that says, "I am better than others," or "I do not need God or my neighbor" – that is sinful. But that is not what Pride celebrations are about.

At their best, Pride celebrations are about holy dignity. They are about refusing shame, resisting dehumanization, and affirming that every person bears the image of God. Humility is not about thinking less of yourself. It is about standing truthfully before God and that does not require people to despise themselves.

For LGBTQ+ people, that may include saying, "I am not a mistake. I am not outside the reach of grace. I am God's beloved."

That is not the pride Scripture condemns. That is closer to testimony. It is closer to gratitude. It is closer to the psalmist's words: "I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

The sin of pride says, "I am above others."

Holy dignity says, "I am beloved by God, and so are you."

As followers of Christ, we are called to humility, yes. But Christian humility is not humiliation. It is not self-hatred. It is the honest recognition that our worth comes not from status, power, or approval, but from the God who created us, loves us, and calls us beloved.



Pictured above: Capital Pride Parade participants from the United Methodist Churches of the National Capital Area, 2026. St. Paul's was represented by David Codner, Joey & Matthew Heath-Mason with Amaya and Andre, and Erin Bone Steele with Genevieve and Penelope.

Worship Schedule and Sunday Scripture

Sunday, July 5

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30
10:30 AM Summer Worship
Rev. Sheridan Allmond, preaching

Sunday, July 12

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
10:30 AM Summer Worship
Rev. Sheridan Allmond, preaching

Sunday, July 19

Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
10:30 AM Summer Worship
Rev. Sheridan Allmond, preaching

Sunday, July 26

Scripture: Romans 8:26-39
10:30 AM Summer Worship
Rev. Joey Heath-Mason, preaching

Worship Livestreams each Sunday at 10:30 AM
stpaulsk.org/worship/worship-at-home

Still Wednesday Summer

Wednesdays
July 15, 2026
August 19, 2026
7:00-8:00 PM



This hour of reflection, contemplation, togetherness, and silent prayer is a haven in the midst of busy days. The exact format varies but usually includes about 20 minutes of silent prayer, journaling, reflection, and optional time to share. Still Wednesday will meet in the Sanctuary or Octagon once a month this summer. We will return to weekly meetings in September.

Summer Worship Hours

Summer Sunday Worship
June 14 to August 30, 2026
10:30 AM only

Communion during Worship: 1st Sunday of the month
On Sundays when communion is not part of the order of worship, blessed "all-in-one" packages will be available at the chancel rail for all who wish to receive communion.

Summer Break

Many groups modify their schedules or take a break during the summer season, before coming back refreshed to greet the new programming year in the fall.

Currently on Summer Break

Taste & Sing
Yarn Ministry
Sunday School
Sermon Safari
Lydia Circle Sisters
St. Paul's Youth (SPY)
Joyful Ringers Bell Ensemble
Sanctuary Choir
Children's Choir
Still Wednesday (reduced meeting dates)

Sympathy

The St. Paul's community offers our deepest sympathies for those who have lost loved ones recently.



Anne & Phil Rush and family,
following the death of Anne's mother

Beryl Spry

Valerie & Rocky Moretti and family,
following the death of Rocky's father

Frank Moretti

Thank You!

On behalf of my mother Bettye King, I wish to thank the dozens of folks who recently sent her love and birthday wishes. Mom turned 100 years young in early May, and the flood of joy-filled cards from St. Paul's began. She especially enjoyed being serenaded with "Happy Birthday" by the choir and congregation on Sunday, May 3. While her memory of many things has faded in recent years, she still wakes up singing hymns — and sometimes composing new ones! It is absolutely accurate to say much of Mom's life has been centered on St. Paul's, and it was lovely to be remembered by the folks she admires most. As Bettye herself would say, "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Regards,
Jamie K. McIntyre

Scam Reminder



Scammers use public information (like the pastor's name) to create fake email addresses and pose as church leaders, asking for money or gift cards. Contributions should only be made through stpaulsk.org/giving or sent to the church's physical address at 10401 Armory Avenue, Kensington MD 20895.

Send a Card or Note

The following St. Paul's members are currently limited in their abilities to participate in the life of the church in-person, and appreciate your thoughts and expressions of care.

Mrs. Mabel Baker
3616 Littledale Rd
Apt 302B
Kensington MD 20895

Mrs. Dorothea Depenbrock
6602 Greyswood Road
Larmax Home
North Bethesda MD 20817

Dr. Jo Campa
301 Russell Ave
Wilson Building, #219
Gaithersburg MD 20877

Mrs. Carol MacIntyre
2100 Merrifields Dr.
Silver Spring MD 20906

Mrs. Mary Lou DeHaven
900 N. Taylor St.
Apt. 421 West Tower
Arlington, VA 22201

Mrs. Marybelle Waldroff
9901 Capitol View Ave
Silver Spring MD 20910



Welcoming Statement



We, the community of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Kensington, welcome you in love. Jesus Christ accepts all, excluding none. So we welcome and affirm you who are gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or queer. We welcome you without regard to your sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, culture, race, ethnicity, ability, education, or age. We welcome you no matter your immigration, marital, or economic status. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, we welcome and affirm you as one of God's children into our community of God's unbounded love. All are celebrated here and all are safe.

Librarians, Libraries, and Thanks

Dear St. Paul's Family,

I am deeply moved to write to you both as Executive Director of Friends of the Library, Montgomery County, and as a fellow member of this congregation. Last month, you showed up in a powerful way — screening *The Librarians*, a documentary that does not shy away from the difficult realities facing public and school-based libraries today, and at the same time generously collecting over 150 books to support FOLMC's work.

The Librarians is not an easy watch. It confronts the wave of book bans and challenges to intellectual freedom that are reshaping communities across the country — including our own. Libraries, and the librarians who serve them, are on the front lines of a fight for open access to ideas, diverse stories, and the freedom to read. That St. Paul's chose to engage with this film — and to respond with action — speaks directly to who we are as a community of faith committed to justice, dignity, and the full humanity of every person.

Your donated books will be sold through FOLMC's used bookstores in Rockville and Wheaton, and funds raised go back into Montgomery County Public Libraries — supporting summer reading programs, STEM activities, early literacy stations, digital media labs for teens, and so much more. It is a simple and beautiful loop: books given in generosity become resources that open doors for thousands of county residents.

Thank you for seeing this work as your own. I am grateful beyond words.

With love and gratitude,
Ari Z. Brooks



P.S. Check out www.folmc.org to learn more about the organization, our bookstore hours, or to donate. We accept donations all year long!



Bible & Brews

Upcoming dates (subject to change):

- Saturday, July 18, 2026, 5:00-6:00 PM
- Saturday, August 15, 2026, 5:00-6:00 PM

All are welcome at this monthly gathering for interfaith conversations with Pastor Joey, Rabbi Adam, and friends from Temple Emanuel. Family-friendly meetings take place at a local Kensington small business, where you can purchase food or beverages as you like. For June, we will meet at Babycat Brewery. Contact joeyhm@stpaulsk.org with any questions!

Lydia Circle Leaders

After 13 years of service, Susan Schwarz is stepping down as the leader of the Lydia Circle. Any ladies interested in leading the Lydia Circle starting in Fall 2026 may contact Susan at susan10748@aol.com or 301-339-8242 for more information.



Office Hours

Summer Drop-in and Telephone Hours run June 15 to September 2, 2026. We are open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We are available outside of posted hours! Please reach out to make an appointment. Contact info for all of our staff can be found on page 2.

“Echoes of Freedom” Art Exhibit

Join St. Paul’s for a powerful Juneteenth Art Show honoring resilience, creativity, and the ongoing journey toward liberation. We are hosting this special art exhibit collaboration with the 5th Anniversary of Kensington Juneteenth Celebrations and Collective Glow Art Exhibitions.

This year’s theme, “Echoes of Freedom: Finding Our Path,” brings together works that reflect the stories, struggles, and triumphs woven through generations. Under the thoughtful curation of Dinah Myers Schroeder, the exhibition highlights several area artists working in a variety of mediums, whose voices illuminate the past while inspiring the future.

The exhibit is open to the public through July 7, 2026.

Sundays 12:00-2:00 PM

Tuesdays 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM & 5:00-7:00 PM



Blood Drive

Thursday, July 9, 1:30-6:00 PM

Please consider giving blood to alleviate summer shortages! The Red Cross Blood Drive will be in the North Bethesda community on Thursday, July 9 at Trinity Lutheran Church, 11200 Old Georgetown Road. As a thank you, the American Red Cross will be giving away Looney Tunes t-shirts to celebrate the country's 250th birthday.

Sign up on the American Red Cross Website www.redcrossblood.org and enter Sponsor ID: “TrinityLutheranNBethesda” or call 1-800-733-2767 to schedule your life-saving donation.

Remember to bring a photo ID, eat a healthy breakfast or lunch, and drink plenty of water before your appointment. For best results, eat meals high in both iron and vitamin C for a week before you donate!



Who Makes Hunger Ministry Run? You Do!



The Hunger Ministry at St. Paul’s feeds about 170 households every month, year-round, because of our volunteers and donors! From moving supplies to taking inventory, from packing bags to sorting donated produce, from delivering groceries to greeting recipients to handing out meals, all of it happens because of you!

Since the start of the Hunger Ministry, we have relied on our supporters to fill the shelves with pantry staples and special treats. We gratefully receive all new, undamaged shelf-stable nonperishables (except glass containers). This summer we are seeing a change in our supply chain, with one of our bulk-order options going away, but don’t worry -- we are already working to set up new food bank partnerships. In the meantime, we rely, as we always do, on our friends who can contribute financially and those who are able to place groceries in our donation bins each week.

Donations Needed Every Month

** Special Focus for Summer*

- peanut butter
- *canned tuna **
- *canned chicken **
- canned vegetables
- canned fruit or applesauce
- cereal *
- *instant/quick oatmeal **
- soup
- rice
- beans
- pasta
- pasta sauce (plastic jars)
- cooking oil
- boxed milk or oat milk

“NO THANK YOU”

- No dirty or damaged containers. No items beyond their “best by” or “sell by” dates. *We can’t give them out, and our volunteers have to throw away damaged or “expired” containers.*
- No glass. Glass breaks and creates a hazard - and a mess!

Do you know a member of the church or someone in our neighborhood who needs food? New recipients can contact the church office or visit the Fellowship Hall at 7:00 PM on the second Monday each month.

Lay Leader Reflections

From Anne Dean, Lay Leader

Alison Clark is mom to Iris, a rising 5th grader, and serves as the Finance Lead on the Church Leadership Team. If you are interested in learning more, reach out to Alison at alisonjclark@yahoo.com.

Since joining St. Paul's UMC in 2013, Alison Clark has sought to live out the promises made in the UMC membership vows through service, leadership, and ministry.

After returning to the local area from New York, Alison first became involved at St. Paul's with Justice & Compassion and Hunger Ministries, drawing on food pantry volunteer experiences. Her journey into church leadership began with a personal invitation. But the decision was about more than simply saying yes to a request.

"When I thought about it, I felt like serving was part of what I had already agreed to when I became a member," she reflected. "If I could be helpful, why not step forward?"

For Alison, serving on the Church Leadership Team became one way to live out the commitment to support the church with her prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

One surprise has been how enjoyable the work can be. "Church committees can be stereotyped as boring," she laughed, "but we have more fun than people might realize."

Today, much of her focus is on financial oversight. Alison sees this as important work that enables the ministries and mission of our church. Transparency and stewardship help build trust and ensure that resources are used faithfully in support of God's work.

The invitation Alison reiterates to others is simple: if you think your perspective is different from those already around the leadership table, that is exactly why the church needs you. A stronger church is built when people with different gifts, experiences, and backgrounds answer the call to serve.



Alison and Iris Clark

Project Transformation D.C. Fundraiser



Project Transformation, which began as a seminary class project, connects churches, children, and college students through programs that build community and raise literacy in underserved neighborhoods. Support Project Transformation DC this summer with their first-ever Family Feud-style fundraiser! Gather a team of 5 adults, raise \$500 to support children's literacy and young adult leadership, and compete for the title of PTDC Family Feud Champion. Teams earn bonus points by exceeding their fundraising goal, making every dollar count both on and off the game board.

The event takes place Thursday, July 30 at 6:00 PM, at Emory Fellowship UMC (6100 Georgia Ave NW, Washington, DC).

Interested in forming a team or learning more? Contact Bkenn@projecttransformationdc.org. Come play, cheer, and help transform communities!

Annual Conference Report

From Marge & Rich Higgins, Lay Delegates to Annual Conference

We once again had the opportunity to represent St. Paul's as lay members to the 242nd session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church in Baltimore in May. This year's conference theme was Rooted in Christ: Love Boldly!

Drawing on Ephesians 3:16-19, Bishop Easterling preached a message entitled "Embodying the Call to Love Boldly," challenging the church to move beyond measuring ministry solely through attendance, budgets, and programs and instead ask whether congregations are embodying the transformative love of Christ, and urging the embodiment of Christ's love through both compassion and courageous public witness.

During the Laity Session, we were challenged to embrace evangelism as relationship-building, invitation, and witness, and reminded that the most effective form of evangelism remains a simple personal invitation.

Of course, there were votes on a variety of issues, and the conference concluded with the fixing of appointments (Pastor Sheridan and Pastor Joey are staying with us for another year!) and ordination of Elders and Deacons.

You may remember that last year, we told you that we had voted on four UMC constitutional amendments that needed two-thirds of the aggregate vote from across every annual conference. The news we were waiting for then, which was announced in November 2025 by the Council of Bishops and celebrated in worship at St Paul's, is that the amendments all passed! They address:

- Regionalization that gives The United Methodist Church's geographic regions equal decision-making authority.
- Adding "gender" and "ability" to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership in a United Methodist Church.
- Strengthening the denomination's longtime stance for racial justice.
- Clarifying who can elect the clergy delegates who serve at General Conference, and at U.S. jurisdictional and central conference, which elect bishops.

Thanks for allowing us to serve St. Paul's in this way!

For more specifics on conference activities, please visit:
<https://www.bwcumc.org/events/2026-annual-conference/>

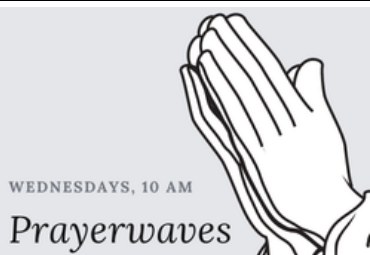


*Top Right: Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling offering a prayer
 Bottom Right: Pastor Sheridan and Pastor Joey receive communion
 Left: Rev. Sheridan Allmond presenting a report on behalf of the BWC Trustees*



More Ways to Be Involved

Many groups meet regularly during the year, and there are many ways to get involved with ministries, outreach, and hospitality at St. Paul's. Here are some of the groups inviting you to join in ministry and fellowship.



Wednesdays at 10:00 AM

Prayerwaves meets each week by phone. We take turns lifting up the needs of the church, community, and the world. On Wednesday, dial 425-436-6326 a few minutes before 10:00 AM. Enter access code 774042 followed by the # sign. If you would like to receive the prayer list by email, please contact Erin Steele in the church office at stpaulsunited@stpaulsk.org.



This time for fellowship with drinks and snacks after worship occurs whenever a family, class, or groups offers to host. You might serve the ever-popular coffee and cookies... or it might be lemonade and cheese crackers, tea and tarts, cider and donuts, cocoa and candy canes... you decide! To host, simply add your name or group to the chart on the office bulletin board and take an instructions sheet (also available for download at stpaulsk.org/community/calendar-events).



Would life feel better right now if you had someone to listen to your worries and cares? Stephen Ministers are there for you! Stephen Ministers have received special training to provide one-on-one Christian care to those who are experiencing challenging life events. To learn how you or someone you know can receive care – or how to become a Stephen Minister – contact Martha Lipscomb, Stephen Leader, at mmlipscomb@verizon.net or 301-518-1642.



Few things better demonstrate our hospitality than making sure all of our members and friends receive a warm welcome upon arrival at church, and that new Sunday morning visitors can get some simple questions answered! Please consider participating in St. Paul's Welcome Ministry. We are always looking for volunteers to cover the welcome table by the Sanctuary doors and guide people as they enter for worship. Families are invited to volunteer together!



St. Paul's makes every effort to reach out to those who are experiencing times of sickness, grief, change, or celebration by providing greeting cards each week. On typical Sundays, anyone can stop by the Welcome Desk to pick up a pre-addressed, pre-stamped card. You can write a personal note or simply sign the card and drop it in the mail. We know card recipients are truly thankful for the notes that come their way.

Want to send your own card later, or spend some time in prayer for our members and friends? Pick up a Congregational Care list at the welcome desk on Sunday mornings. Please note that the Congregational Care list is not exhaustive. For privacy reasons, St. Paul's only shares information if given permission to do so by the person(s) involved or an immediate family member. If you have information to share please contact Erin Steele in the church office at stpaulsunited@stpaulsk.org.



Church leaders at St. Paul's serve in a unified board to guide such things as the church mission and ministry, finances, and personnel. The Leadership Team meets once a month in-person in the Octagon with a Zoom option, all meetings are open to the public. Contact the chairperson for 2026, Bill Stephens (wtstephens@verizon.net) for the meeting schedule and the Zoom link. For more about the Leadership Team, visit stpaulsk.org/community/meet-the-staff and scroll to the bottom of the page.



St. Paul's

United Methodist Church

10401 Armory Avenue
Kensington, MD 20895

stpaulsk.org | 301-933-7933

Worship with St. Paul's

Sunday Worship in the Sanctuary

July 5

10:30 AM • Summer Worship with Communion

June 12, 19, 26

10:30 AM • Summer Worship

Worship-at-Home

Livestreaming every Sunday at 10:30 AM

stpaulsk.org/worship/worship-at-home



July 2026

Epistle Options

Email (color) or Mail (black & white):
Email stpaulsunited@stpaulsk.org
to be added to the distribution list

Download (color)
stpaulsk.org/community/epistle-weekly-news