

THE EPISTLE OF St. Paul

November 2026

St. Paul

United Methodist
Church

244 Kurtz Road
Marietta, Georgia
30066
770-422-1089

www.stpaulumc.com
churchoffice@stpaulumc.com
<https://onrealm.org/stpaulumc>

Rev. Shelia Preacher
sheliapreacher@comcast.net
678-925-0103

Children's Ministry
Victoria Godfrey

Music Director
Hope Field

Accompanist
Dorothy McCracken

Administrative
Assistant
Louise Byrd

Financial Secretary
Ed Jackson

Lead Nursery
Morgan Field

Nursery Assistant
Zahra Taylor

Sunday Schedule
9:45 Sunday School

11:00 Worship

The Difference Between Counting Blessings and Living Blessed

Rev. Shelia Preacher

Thanksgiving season brings a familiar invitation: **Count your blessings!** And we should! There is something powerful about pausing long enough to recognize the gifts we might otherwise take for granted—the people who love us, the experiences that shape us, the opportunities before us, and the grace of God that sustains us through it all.



But I wonder...is there is a difference between *counting our blessings* and *LIVING blessed*? Counting blessings helps us recognize what we have received. Living blessed asks what we will DO with what we have received.

In 2 Corinthians 9:8–11, Paul reminds us that God provides what we need so that we can abound in good works and become generous in ways that produce thanksgiving to God. In other words, our blessings aren't simply possessions to enjoy or experiences to appreciate. They are also gifts **placed in our hands for a purpose**—gifts that can become a blessing to someone else.

So, WHAT IF we began asking different questions?

- ◇What if, instead of simply counting our blessings, we ask how we might share them?
- ◇How might our time become a blessing to someone who feels forgotten?
- ◇How might our experience help someone facing a challenge we've already navigated?
- ◇How might our financial resources, practical skills, listening ears, or words of encouragement meet a need we might otherwise overlook?

(Continued on page 2)

Counting Blessings (Continued from page 1)

And what if we began asking those questions not only as individuals, but as a CHURCH?

Look around St. Paul! We share our building with children who come to play soccer, neighbors who gather for community activities, people seeking support and connection, and those who come for music, fellowship, and care. Through our blood drives, Messy Church, Stephen Ministry, GriefShare, chair yoga, and other ministries, we offer more than programs. We offer opportunities for people to experience welcome, hope, companionship, and love.

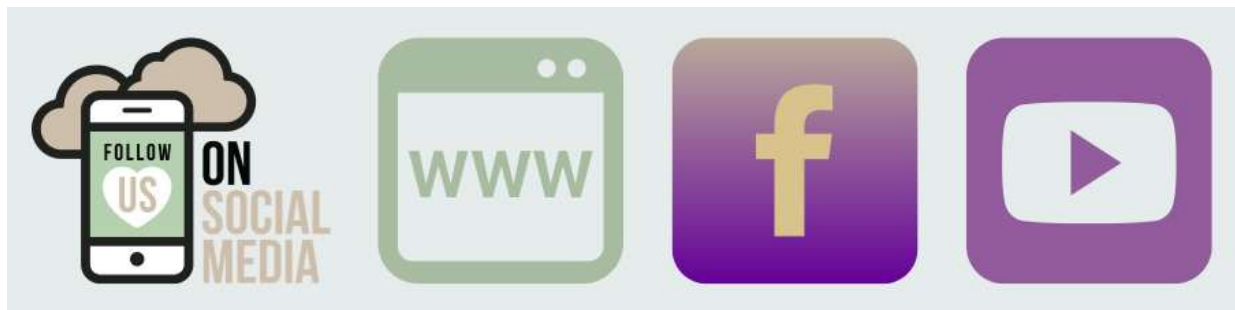
These ministries happen because people share what they have—their gifts, their time, their resources, their compassion, and their willingness to serve. And our blessings reach beyond our walls into the lives of people we may never fully know.

Dear ones, what if the measure of our blessings isn't simply how much we have RECEIVED, but how much God can accomplish through what we SHARE? This entire month of November, I challenge each of us to move beyond reflection to action. Choose one thing you can do each week: call someone who may be lonely, invite someone to share a meal, offer your time or skills to a ministry, encourage someone who is struggling, or give toward a need in our community. Then, before the week ends, DO IT!

Because counting our blessings fills our hearts with gratitude. But LIVING blessed—putting that gratitude into action—is how God transforms lives, strengthens communities, and changes the world. Let's not simply count our blessings. Let's BE a blessing!

With gratitude for the blessings we share, Shelia

**“There is always,
always something
to be thankful for.”**



St. Paul Mission Focus for November 2026

Susan Short

Thanksgiving reminds us to be grateful for the many blessings in our lives, including sufficient food. We can show our gratitude by sharing a meal with hungry people in our community.

Many of our neighborhood children attend **Sawyer Road Elementary School**, and some of the children/families there need assistance with their **Thanksgiving dinner**.

If you would like to participate, sign up in the church narthex and pick up a decorative bag to fill. The school also requests a \$30.00 gift card to Kroger, Publix, or Walmart to complete their protein for their Thanksgiving meal.

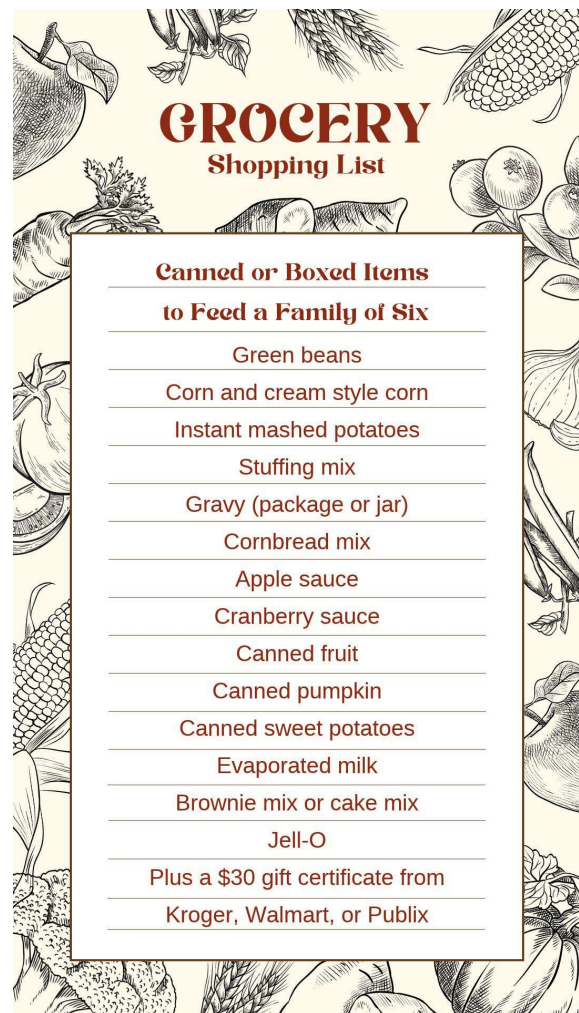
If you know someone who cannot shop but would like to participate, perhaps you could shop for them or share a bag: one can buy the food items and the other can provide the gift card for your bag.

Please place the gift card and its receipt in an envelope and securely attach the envelope to the upper inside of your food bag. Then, bring your completed bag and gift card to the **MUST box in the church narthex by November 15**.

A school representative will pick up the bags from the church and deliver them to the families before the Thanksgiving break. Kindly pray for the recipients!

This congregation continues to reach out to our community in so many ways! Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and support for our neighbors!!

Praise and honor to Christ!



Gifts That Make a Difference

Hope Field

God has given each of us gifts and talents. Some of us can sing beautifully. Some are comfortable speaking in front of a crowd. Others have a gift for teaching, organizing, listening, encouraging, creating, or simply showing up when someone needs a helping hand. We are all different, and that is part of God's wonderful plan.

But have you ever stopped to think about why God gave you your particular gifts? Our talents are not just for our own enjoyment or personal success. They are opportunities to make a difference in others' lives.

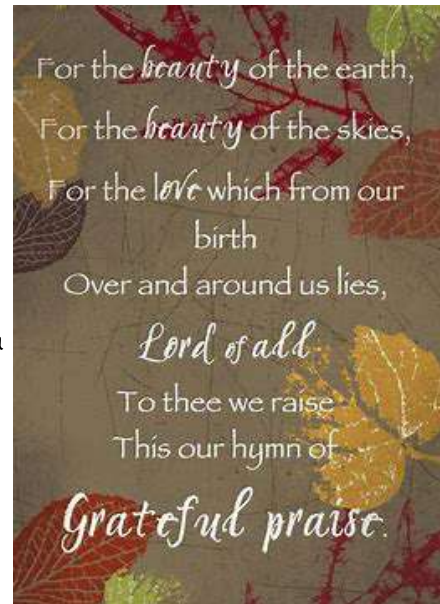
Think about someone who sings in the church choir. Their voice may be beautiful, but the real gift is what happens when someone hears that music and feels hope again. Think about someone who speaks in front of a group. Their words may be inspiring, but the real gift is when those words encourage someone ready to give up. Think about the person who quietly prepares a meal, visits someone who is lonely, or lends a listening ear. Their actions may seem small, but they can remind someone that they are loved and not forgotten.

First Peter 4:10 tells us, "Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." God has entrusted us with gifts, and we are called to use them to help others.

And here is the important part: We don't have to be the best at something to make a difference. We don't have to be the loudest voice, the most talented singer, or the most confident speaker. We simply need to be willing to use what we have, where we are, for the good of someone else.

Sometimes we hold back because we think our gifts are too ordinary or not good enough. We compare ourselves with others and forget that God isn't asking us to be someone else. God is asking us to be faithful with what we have been given.

So, what are your gifts? And more importantly, how are you using them? This week, look for an opportunity to put one of your talents to work. Sing a song that lifts someone's spirit. Speak a word that gives someone courage. Share a skill, offer your time, or do something kind without expecting anything in return. Don't just use your gifts to serve; use them to make a difference. You may never know how much one small act means to another person. But when we offer our gifts with love, even the simplest things can become something extraordinary in God's hands.



What Our Giving Makes Possible

Chris Heldreth

Have you ever considered that giving is not just a blessing to the person who receives, but also to the person who gives? When we give from the heart, we experience the joy of sharing, the gratitude of having enough to share, and the fulfillment of knowing that we are participating in something greater than ourselves.

In our Christian faith, giving is an expression of love and gratitude to God. It reminds us that all we have is a gift, and we are called to use those blessings to make a difference in the lives of others. As we give, we discover that generosity is not measured solely by the amount we offer, but by the love and spirit in which it is given.

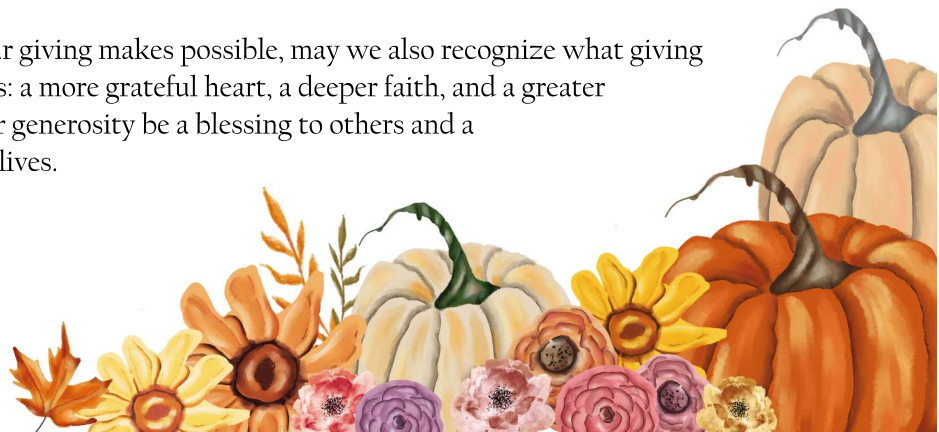
THANKS GIVING

Our giving makes possible the many ministries of St. Paul's, from worship and fellowship to caring for our neighbors and serving our community. It helps create a place where people can find comfort in times of sorrow, encouragement during difficult seasons, and companionship along their faith journey. Each gift becomes part of a larger story of faith, hope, and love.

But something wonderful happens within us when we give. Generosity shifts our focus from what we lack to the blessings we already have. It helps us grow in compassion, strengthens our connection to our church family, and allows us to experience the joy of being part of God's work in the world. Giving becomes an act of worship—a way to put our faith into action.

Jesus reminds us that there is blessing in giving. When we give freely and joyfully, we discover that the reward is not always something we can see or measure. Sometimes it is the quiet peace of knowing we have helped someone, the joy of seeing a ministry flourish, or the deep satisfaction of knowing our gifts have made a difference.

As we reflect on what our giving makes possible, may we also recognize what giving makes possible within us: a more grateful heart, a deeper faith, and a greater capacity to love. May our generosity be a blessing to others and a source of joy in our own lives.



Meet Edward "Ed" Jackson: Devoted Member, Dedicated Servant, and Cherished Part of St. Paul UMC

Kathy Lim Sang



Ed Jackson

Ed's journey to St. Paul began in June 2006, when he and his late wife, Brenda, moved to Acworth, Georgia, following his retirement after 36 years of federal service. Drawn to the area from Germany, Ed and Brenda were invited to visit by his brother Mike and sister-in-law Tamara, who were already active members. Falling in love with what the church had to offer, Ed has called St. Paul home ever since. Though raised in the Presbyterian Church in Starke, Florida, Ed has deeply rooted himself at St. Paul, where he faithfully serves as our Financial Secretary.

Family is central to Ed's heart. He was married to Brenda for 45 wonderful years before her passing in 2018, and he cherishes the memory of their life together, and still misses her every day. Ed is fiercely proud of his two college-graduate children and his grandsons. His daughter, Debbie, lives in Brookhaven with her husband, Scott, and their two sons, Jackson and Dylan, who are both students at Auburn University. His son, Derek, lives with Ed and provides loving, invaluable support in looking after Ed's health. Ed also maintains close bonds with his two younger brothers, Michael in Virginia and Jeff in Florida.

Ed's life is defined by a remarkable commitment to service. He proudly served four years in the U.S. Air Force with assignments in Thailand and Vietnam. As a result of his service, he is a 100% disabled veteran from Agent Orange exposure. After his discharge in 1967, Ed earned his accounting degree and embarked on a distinguished career as a civilian Supervisory Auditor for the Air Force, which included 14 wonderful years stationed in Germany.

Today, Ed applies his sharp, detail-oriented accounting mind to managing church finances, finding deep satisfaction in supporting St. Paul. Beyond his analytical strengths, he is known for his compassion, empathy, and readiness to help those in need.

In his free time, Ed enjoys a vibrant social life and rich hobbies. He is an active member of American Legion Post 304 in Acworth, where he enjoys playing bingo, trivia nights, and fellowship with a monthly veteran group. He has also nurtured a lifelong passion for genealogy since 1999. Though arthritis has quieted the guitar he has played since age 16—when he even performed in a high school and college rock band—his creative spirit remains.

Guided by his favorite Bible verses, Philippians 4:13 ("I can do all this through him who gives me strength") and John 14:6, Ed navigates his health challenges with grace and looks to the future with hope. Above all, his greatest joy is spending time dining and gathering with his children, grandchildren, and dear friends.

We are deeply blessed by Ed's enduring faith, steady leadership, and warm presence at St. Paul. Be sure to introduce yourself and welcome Ed the next time you see him!

When Gratitude and Grief Sit at the Same Table

“[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God,” — 2 Corinthians 1:4 (NIV).

As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, messages of joy and gratitude surround us. But for those who have lost someone they love, the holidays can bring a fresh ache. A familiar song, an empty chair at the table, or a treasured tradition can remind us of someone whose absence is deeply felt. That's why St. Paul's GriefShare ministry is such a blessing to our community.

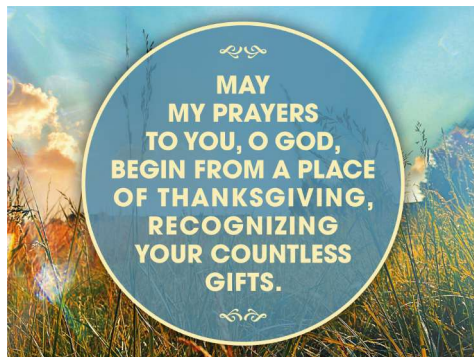


Under the caring leadership of Kathy Lim Sang, St. Paul has just completed another in-depth, 13-week GriefShare support group. Throughout those weeks, individuals from our community gathered, bringing their stories of loss, treasured memories, questions, and tears. Yet even in the midst of their own grief, they made room for one another. They listened. They shared. They offered encouragement and understanding. Together, they discovered that while grief may be a lonely road, it doesn't have to be traveled alone.

Sometimes, we imagine that we must have everything figured out before we can be a blessing to someone else. But often, our greatest gift is not having the answers. It is knowing what it feels like to hurt and choosing to walk beside someone who hurts, too. The comfort we once received can become the comfort we offer. Our experience, even the painful parts, can help someone else find hope.

As the holidays approach, let's remember that gratitude and sorrow can sit at the same table. We can be profoundly grateful for the people we have loved and still miss them desperately. Giving thanks for their lives does not mean we have stopped grieving their absence. Both feelings can be true, and both deserve room.

But perhaps this Thanksgiving we might consider, “How might we share our blessings with someone who is struggling this season?” We might invite a grieving friend to share a holiday meal, speak the name of the person they miss, listen without trying to fix their pain, or simply let them know they don't have to pretend to be cheerful around us. A phone call, a handwritten note, or an invitation that doesn't demand a particular response can mean more than we realize.



Through Kathy's leadership and the shared care of GriefShare participants, we are reminded that God can use even our hardest experiences to help another person find light in a difficult season. May we be a people who make room for both tears and thanksgiving—and who never underestimate the blessing of simply showing up for one another. If you or someone you know is struggling with the upcoming holidays, please contact Kathy or Shelia.





Witch Debbie



Peggy "Ghoul"



Whooo is this?



Neighborhood Pals



"HopeFull" & Friend



Good Eats



Susan "McChillin"
& Friends

The Treasure that We Seek

Bob Trengove

We are all seeking something in our lives to find fulfillment. This month we have a couple of events that let us think of all the people who have been in our lives and the thankfulness we all have as we look at all the wonderful blessings that God has given us. We all seek treasures in life and maybe do not recognize that they may be right in front of us.

First, we have All Saints' Day, on which we celebrate and remember the lives that have gone before. We can first commemorate the lives that have passed since the last All Saints' Day, but we can also look at all the souls that we have been fortunate to have known.

God is good all the time. All the time God is good.

A reading from the Daily Guideposts from David Tripp says, "The search for treasure is really a search for a Savior." That being the case, we have a map, our Bible, and we have a Savior. He is our greatest treasure, and with Him we have love, acceptance, acknowledgement, and all that satisfies. Now that is treasure worth digging for.

Second, we have Thanksgiving, when many families get together to enjoy a meal and the celebration of thankfulness that we all experience this time every year. It is always wonderful to see your children and grandkids as they grow and experience life. The sharing of their life experiences is what is enjoyed the most. So, as we partake of the meal this Thanksgiving, let's remember all the people in our lives that have brought us to this point. Thanks be to all the family members before us and those that have passed on to be with our Savior. Thanks to our church and all the experiences we have been fortunate to partake in, but especially thanks be to God and all he continually does for us until we are fortunate to be with him.

Dear Heavenly Father, Your word is the map that leads us to You. Thank You for the treasures You have given over the years that can not compare to those we will have when we pass on to be with You. Thank you for all the blessings You have given us and thank you for all the souls we have known and know as we experience this life. In Jesus Name, We Pray, AMEN.

Many activities are still being performed at St. Paul by the Building and Grounds Team. The following are a few of the tasks completed or in progress.



(Continued on page 11)

"The Treasure We Seek" Continued from page 10)

- ◇Our sanctuary roof is more than 20 years old. We are currently looking at the cost of replacement as well as the elimination of the skylight.
- ◇Need to look at painting doors and trim around the church building entrances.
- ◇The ramp to the annex is on the list to be painted. Bob has paint.
- ◇Some Timbers on the playground need to be replaced.
- ◇Landscaping overgrowth at the parsonage, pine islands, and street corners needs to be addressed. Tom has sprayed the undergrowth with brush killer.
- ◇Mike is still testing the internet speed issue of the line coming into the church, but suggests that, at a minimum, we should purchase a new router (\$250-\$450).



STORY TIME WITH SANTA

A ST. PAUL UMC TRADITION OF JOY!
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5
3:30-5:00 P.M.

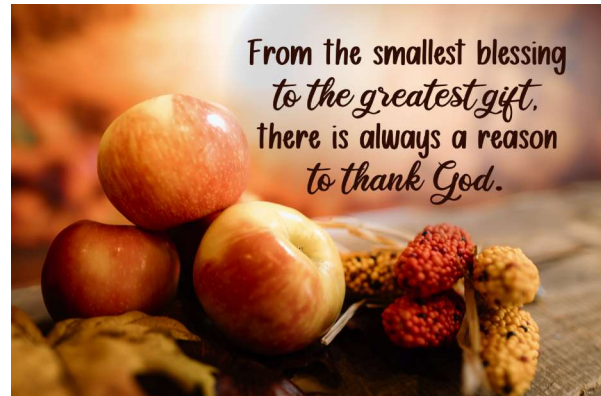
- Take a break from the holiday rush and join us for an afternoon of fun, laughter, and Christmas wonder!
- At Story Time with Santa, families can enjoy arts & crafts, cookie decorating, pizza, and plenty of festive cheer.
- Children can also choose free books to take home, extending the fun for days to come.
- Santa and Rudolph will be on hand to read the Christmas story and spend one-on-one time with every child—so be sure to bring your cameras and Christmas lists!
- Invite your friends, neighbors, and grandkids. Come celebrate the heart of the season with us.

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From Noticing Blessings to Becoming One

Victoria Godfrey

As Thanksgiving approaches, our hearts naturally turn toward gratitude. We begin thinking about the many blessings God has placed in our lives from family, to friendships, opportunities, answered prayers, and even the little moments of joy that often go unnoticed. Throughout this year, we have challenged ourselves to notice more, to slow down, look closer, and recognize God's presence in the ordinary moments of life. But as we enter November, I wonder if God is inviting us to take that idea one step further.



What if noticing our blessings is only the beginning? It's one thing to recognize God's goodness in our lives. It's another to allow that goodness to flow through us into the lives of others. After all, blessings were never meant to stop with us. They were meant to be shared.

In Children's Ministry, we have a wonderful opportunity to help our children understand that gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you." Gratitude can become something we do. It might look like inviting someone to join a game, making a card for someone who is lonely, adding streamers to your Pastor's door to celebrate Pastor Appreciation Month, helping without being asked, or sharing something with someone in need. These small acts may seem ordinary, but they have the power to make an extraordinary difference.

And perhaps that's something we adults need to remember, too. We don't have to have endless resources, special talents, or all the answers to be a blessing. Sometimes the greatest gift we can offer is our time, our encouragement, our kindness, or simply our presence. In 1 Peter 4:10, we are reminded to use the gifts God has given us to serve one another.

So this Thanksgiving season, let's continue noticing more—but let's also challenge ourselves to do more with what we notice. When we recognize a need, let's respond. When we experience kindness, let's pass it along. When we count our blessings, let's consider how we might become one for somebody else. Because perhaps the most meaningful way to thank God for our blessings is to become a blessing ourselves.

HAPPY
THANKSGIVING

Many Gifts—One Church. Every Member Has a Gift

By Mike McMillin, Lay Leader

Have you ever watched someone serve at church and thought, “I wish I had a gift like that”? Perhaps you noticed a beautiful voice, a thoughtful teacher, or someone who always knows what to say. Your own gifts may seem ordinary. Yet God can use what you offer in ways you may never see.

In Acts 11:22–24, Barnabas arrived in Antioch, recognized God’s grace at work, and encouraged believers to remain faithful. He helped others grow because his own life was rooted in Christ.

How do we grow that way? We make room for God. Through prayer, Scripture, worship, Holy Communion, fellowship, and service, the Holy Spirit shapes our hearts. As Methodists, we call these means of grace: ways God meets us and helps us grow in love. We also need our own Barnabas—someone who listens, prays with us, and speaks the truth with kindness.

Then we carry that love into everyday life. A Barnabas might sit beside someone who is worshipping alone, call an absent member, encourage a young person, tutor a student, deliver a meal, repair a neighbor’s step, or simply listen.

Some gifts are quiet: patience, hospitality, generosity, organizing, or noticing who has been overlooked. When health or circumstances limit us, a prayer, phone call, or encouraging note can become a precious ministry. Sometimes our greatest gift is helping someone recognize theirs. “You made me feel welcome.” “You explain things clearly.” “Would you help me?” A sincere invitation, with someone willing to walk alongside us, can turn uncertainty into a first step of faith.

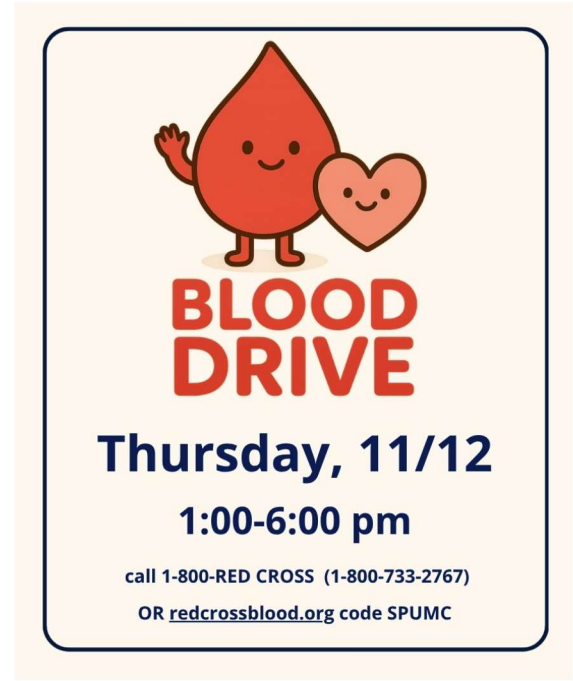
We may still wonder, “Can I do the hard thing God is asking?” Grace means God is already at work before we answer. We can trust God’s presence and strength. We offer ourselves faithfully; God brings growth in God’s time.

This month, ask: “Lord, which gift are you inviting me to share, and who needs it?” Tell a ministry leader what you can offer or ask where help is needed. If you need encouragement, reach out. Receiving care is a form of discipleship, too.

Imagine St. Paul as a church where gifts are noticed, needs are shared, and nobody serves alone. Every member has something to offer through God’s grace, whatever our age or season of life.

Whose gifts might you help uncover? Whose Barnabas will you be?







NOVEMBER

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Daylight Time Ends 9:45a SS 11a Worship 2p UPfield Soccer 3p Staff	2 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga	3 10a ChristWalk (FH) 7p ChristWalk (Zoom)		1	2	3
8 9:45a SS 11a Worship 2p UPfield Soccer	9 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga 6:30p Building & Grounds	10 10a ChristWalk (FH) 7p ChristWalk (Zoom)	11	12 1p Blood Drive	13	14
15 9:45a SS 11a Worship 2p UPfield Soccer 3p Leadership	16 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga	17 Noon Flix and Food	18	19 6:30p Stephen Ministry	20	21
22 9:45a SS 11a Worship 12m Decorate the Sanctuary 2p UPfield Soccer	23 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga	24 10a ChristWalk (FH) 4p Hope House 7p ChristWalk (Zoom)	25	26 Thanksgiving Office Closed	27	28

Serving This Month

November Servants

Worship Leader—Bob Trengove
Open/Close Facilities—Tom Preacher

Monday Servants:

11/02 Darrell Morgan & Marj Rhodes
11/09 Tom Short & Ruth Castellaw
11/16 Darrell Morgan & Marj Rhodes
11/23 Tom Short & Ruth Castellaw

Media Team—Mike McMillin

Easy Worship—Terry Palmer, Tom Preacher

Audio/Video—Chris Morgan, Jyo Vanapalli
Could it be YOU? Join Us!

Our Faithfulness

*"I will be loyal to St. Paul United Methodist Church
and support her with my prayers,
my presence, my gifts, my service and my witness."*

SEPTEMBER 2026

Our Presence

Average weekly Sunday School attendance 17
Average weekly 11:00 worship attendance 43
Average weekly online attendance 45

Our Gifts—General Fund

SEPTEMBER 2026 Income

Contributions	\$11,776.00
Processing Gifts	\$32.10
Total Contributions.....	\$11,808.10
Rental Property	\$1,885.00
Soccer Rental.....	\$0.00
Total September Revenue	\$13,693.10
Total Expenses for SEPTEMBER ...	\$ 18,674.34
YTD 2026 Income	\$176,552.62
TOTAL 2026 Expenses	\$175,002.34



01 Christine Heldreth	16 Susan Woodward
02 Doug Conley	18 Mary Lou Flenner
07 Carol Preuss	26 Carol Hiers
12 Debbie Isbell	30 Daryl Wright
14 Jyotsna Vanapalli	



Altar Flowers



Cost: \$55.00

11/01 Marj Rhodes
11/08 Available
11/15 Available
11/22 Available
11/29 Available

Sign up on Bulletin Board



November 19

SUGGESTED WORD COUNT: 350-400