

THE EPISTLE OF St. Paul

October 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

What Really Matters (What Matters Most)

Rev. Shelia Preacher

Have you ever noticed there are moments when all the clutter falls away, and life is reduced to its true essence? Honestly, it doesn't happen as often as it should, for far too often we are surrounded by a whirlwind of noise, fear, opinions, and distractions. But in those few, beautifully crystalline-clear moments, we catch a glimpse of what really matters.



You see, in a world where an onslaught of media and messaging shapes our thoughts and actions, it's easy to lose our bearings. We can become so consumed by what seems urgent (or what happens to be the loudest) that we forget what is important. We can spend so much time reacting to the latest headlines, controversy, crisis, or inconvenience that we lose sight of the things that truly give life meaning. And that distraction even happens in our faith journey.

That's why I am really excited about our new ChristWalk study, *What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?—A Guide to What Matters Most*, for it asks some important questions about faith. In many ways, it challenges us to separate what is essential from what is merely noise. For example,

- ☆ Is faith about defending every tradition—or opening our hearts to God's continuing work?
- ☆ Is faith about having all the answers—or trusting God enough to ask honest questions?
- ☆ Is faith about proving we are right—or becoming more like Christ?

(Continued on page 2)

What Really Matters (Continued from page 1)

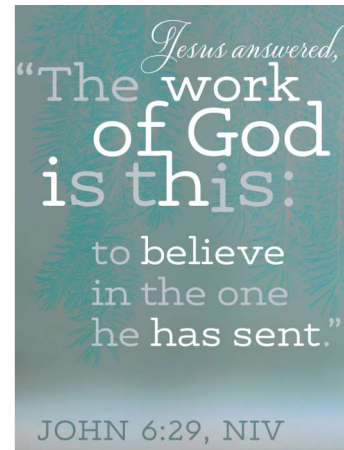
And if you think about it, those questions are not just limited to our spirituality. They spill over into every corner of our life. In the midst of our daily lives...how do our thoughts, our words, our deeds...matter? How do our lives make a difference in this world? Throughout this issue of the Epistle, our various ministries will explore that question from their different perspectives for it shapes who we are and what we do, day-in and day-out, as the body of Christ right here at St. Paul UMC.

Our missions team will explore what matters to our neighbors. GriefShare and Stephen Ministry will reflect on what matters when life hurts. Adult Sunday School will consider the bigger story God is always writing. Buildings and Grounds will remind us that spaces matter because people matter. Children's Ministry will remind us that some of the most important questions are often asked by children—and that our questions matter, too. Music Ministry will share how songs both sustain and shape our faith. Our lay leader will encourage us that a faith that lasts is built step-by-step through daily trust, faithful practices, and a community that walks alongside us. Stewardship asks a poignant question, "What are the things that last?"

They encourage us to look at all our activities—inside our walls and beyond—to consider...does what we do...matter? What is truly important? In an ever-changing world, what shall we hold on to? Perhaps that is the question before all of us this month—and maybe every month: What really matters?

For the truth is, when life is stripped down to its essentials, the answer is rarely complicated. Faith matters. Hope matters. Love matters. People matter. God's presence matters.

My prayer is that this issue will encourage each of us to pause long enough to ask ourselves a simple but important question: In the midst of all the noise, am I simply responding to whatever happens to be the loudest clamoring for my attention—or am I investing my heart, my energy, and my attention—in what really matters? Because what matters most to God should matter most to us.



St. Paul Mission Focus for October 2026

Susan Short

It's our hope that every child walks into school feeling warm, comfortable, and ready to learn. It truly matters. So ~ this month, we are coming together to make sure that **Bells Ferry Elementary students** have a **warm coat** to wear during the cold months.



We have the opportunity to come together and care for children in our community. What matters to our neighbors matters to us! Sometimes, ministry looks like a warm coat, a helping hand or just a simple reminder to a child and their family, that their community cares about and prays for them.

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,” (Mathew 25:40 NIV).

Would you prayerfully consider gifting a **new-with-tags, warm coat** this month? If so, just stop by the Narthex **Sunday, October 4th** to choose a child by size and specifics. Please write your name on the line provided at the sign-up table so we will know who chose each child. Remove the gift tag corresponding with that child. Please use that gift tag on the package containing the new coat you have purchased. Additionally, please pray for the recipient and their families. It matters. When we care for our neighbors, we reflect Gods love.

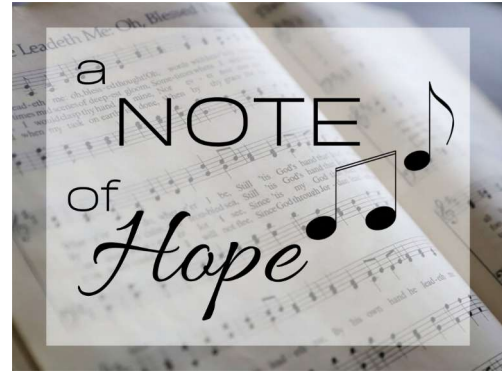
Please return all coats to the MUST box in the Narthex by Sunday, October 25th so that they can be delivered to Bells Ferry Elementary School before the cold weather arrives. If you cannot go to the church, just call the church office at 770-422-1089 and Louise will sign you up and save a gift tag for you!

Thank you for showing what love looks like ~ Praise God.
Kindness matters ~ YOU MATTER.

How Music Sustains Our Faith

Hope Field

Music has a special way of staying with us. Sometimes a song can bring back a memory, lift our spirits, or remind us of something we thought we had forgotten. For people of faith, music can do even more. It can help sustain us through every season of life.



Think about a favorite hymn. Maybe you learned it as a child, sang it with your parents, or heard it during an important moment. Years later, the words may still come to mind when you need comfort or encouragement. A simple hymn can remind us of God's faithfulness when life feels uncertain.

The same is true of the songs we learn at Vacation Bible School. We may not remember every lesson, craft, or snack, but years later we can still sing the chorus. Those joyful songs often become little seeds of faith that stay with us long after the week is over.

And then there are the new worship songs. Their words and melodies may speak to something we are experiencing right now. They give us fresh ways to praise God, express our worries, give thanks, and place our trust in Him.

Music does not replace prayer, Scripture, or fellowship, but it can carry those things deep into our hearts. Sometimes we cannot find the words to pray. A hymn or worship song can pray for us.

Whether it is an old hymn, a childhood chorus, or a brand-new worship song, music reminds us that faith isn't just something we believe—it is something we live, sing, remember, and carry with us. And sometimes, when we need it most, a song is exactly what helps us keep singing.



The Faith That Stays

Mike McMillin, Lay Leader

Faith does not prevent life's ups and downs. Christians still experience disappointment, illness, grief, job loss, uncertainty, strained relationships, and prayers that seem to go unanswered. The difference is that we do not face these things alone.

God promises in Isaiah 43:2, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." Notice that God does not say if we pass through deep waters, but when. Troubles are part of life, yet they do not have the final word. God remains with us in the water, the fire, the waiting, and the healing.

The faith that stays is not always a faith that feels strong. Sometimes it is simply the faith that holds on—or allows others to hold us up when we cannot stand alone. It is trusting that God is still present even when we cannot see what God is doing.

John Wesley understood that faith must be nourished. He taught that God strengthens us through what he called the "means of grace." These include prayer, reading Scripture, worship, Holy Communion, Christian fellowship, fasting, and acts of mercy. These practices do not earn God's love. Instead, they place us where we can

receive the grace God is already offering.

Wesley also knew that we needed one another. Methodists met in small groups to pray, study, confess their struggles, celebrate their growth, and ask one another, "How is it with your soul?" Faith becomes more resilient when we share it. Sometimes God sustains us through a Bible verse or hymn. At other times, God's grace reaches us through a meal, a telephone call, a listening ear, or someone quietly sitting beside us.

What the world throws at us can shake our confidence, change our plans, and leave us wondering what comes next. But it cannot separate us from God's love. Romans 8 reminds us that neither hardship, suffering, fear, nor anything else in creation can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus.

The faith that stays is not built in a single moment. It grows through daily trust, faithful practices, and a community that walks with us. We may lose our footing, but God does not lose his hold on us.

Through every high and low, God's grace remains. That is the faith that stays.



Meet Carol Hiers: A Life of Faith, Family, and Faithful Service

Kathy Lim Sang

St. Paul Methodist Church is blessed with a vibrant, devoted congregation, and this month's membership spotlight shines on Carol Hiers. Rooted in faith, family, and lifelong service, Carol brings our church community a warm spirit and a heart open to God's guidance.



St. Paul
Member Spotlight

Carol Hiers



Carol's faith journey began in her youth at a Methodist church. As her family grew, she sought a church home for her children, leading them to First Christian Church on Merritt Island, Florida, in 1972. After moving to Marietta, Georgia, in 1976, she worked closely with young people from third grade through college, creating some of her fondest memories. Later, in Cleveland, Georgia, she served 15 years as treasurer of Harvest Christian Church. After returning to Marietta with her third husband, the couple attended Mt. Bethel Methodist before travel difficulties led them to their spiritual home at St. Paul.

Drawn by its convenient location and the wonderful "feeling of being home," Carol has been part of the St. Paul family for a decade, with a brief pause as she rediscovered herself as a woman on her own. She considers her greatest God-given strengths to be those of a devoted companion and caregiver to her three wonderful husbands, each of whom she cherishes as God's perfect choice for a particular season of her life.

Carol's professional journey began at the telephone company after a teacher helped her secure an interview. She later devoted years to raising her three children—Gale O'Neill (61), George Baker (58), and Erik Baker (56)—until they reached middle school. Encouraged by a church friend, she built a fulfilling career as an office manager and bookkeeper at three companies. Today, when she is not following God's guidance, she enjoys a relaxing game of cards.

Guided by her favorite verse, Jeremiah 29:11, and ready to go wherever God leads, Carol Hiers is an inspiration to our congregation. Be sure to welcome her warmly the next time you see her at St. Paul!

What Are the Things That Last?

Chris Heldreth

We live in a world filled with uncertainty. We have bills to pay, rising costs, health concerns, family worries, and an endless stream of news competing for our attention. Sometimes the question that quietly weighs on our hearts is, “Will I have enough?” Will I have enough money to last? Enough resources for the future? Enough strength to face whatever comes next?

These concerns are real, but Scripture reminds us that not everything we worry about has lasting value.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19–20, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” Jesus isn’t telling us that planning, saving, or being responsible with our resources is wrong. Rather, He reminds us that our security cannot ultimately be found in what we possess.

So, what are the things that last?

Faith lasts. Our relationship with God is more valuable than anything we can accumulate.

Love lasts. The kindness we show, the encouragement we offer, and the people we make feel valued can have an impact far beyond the moment.

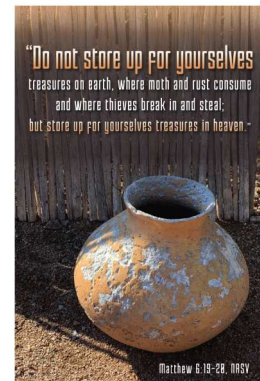
Generosity lasts. When we give of our time, talents, and financial resources, we participate in God’s work and help meet the needs of others.

Our witness lasts. The way we live out our faith may influence someone long after we have forgotten the conversation or act of kindness.

As we consider our personal finances and our church’s financial needs, perhaps the question is not simply, “How much can I afford to give?” but also, “What do I want my resources to accomplish?”

Our earthly resources are temporary. But the love we share, the lives we touch, and the Kingdom work we support can have eternal significance.

In a world that constantly tells us to accumulate more, Christ calls us to remember what truly lasts.





**Join us to Meet Missionaries
John & Katherine Sapp
Serving London's Muslim
Community**

Tuesday, October 27

10:00 a.m. - Fellowship Hall

John and Katherine (daughter of Rev. James Gwin) met in 2016 on a year-long mission trip. By the time they married in 2019, they both felt called to missions. Since then, John and Katherine have been praying over their mission calling. Through this they discerned a calling to unreached people groups and discipleship.

The Muslim Ministry team in London is very new. Katherine and John will be the fourth couple to join the team. London offers a unique chance to meet the Muslim community as fellow immigrants, creating common ground for relationship building. Both John and Katherine love that London offers the opportunity to openly share and discuss their faith with this community.



Sunday, November 1

Let us know of any saints in your immediate family who passed away since last All Saints Day, November 2, 2025.

Return the card in the bulletin

email churchoffice@stpaulumc.com

or call the church office 770/422.1089



Forever Young Presents: SIM Card Protection for Your Cell Phone

Front Row L-R: Terry Palmer, Sandi Hochburger, Susan McMillin, Joan Baker, Betty Gwynn, Ruth Castellaw

Middle Row: Mike McMillin, Carol Preuss

Back Row L-R: Denise Murphy, John Kone, Aaditya Kulkarni

Not Pictured: Darrell Morgan, Bob Homer

Wow...great class! Aaditya Kulkarni did an outstanding job, and he proved to the class loaded with people of our generation, that if we have a computer/cell phone problem, just ask Audity (as he likes to be called) or people of his generation and they will gladly solve it for us. Once again, many thanks to Audity & his dad for driving him to the fellowship hall. We all learned and enjoyed!

We Are the Church

Bob Trengove

I recently heard a phrase that seems to stick with you: “The world is full of good people, but if you can’t find one, be one.” Many people who may not know Jesus visit our facilities. As believers, we need to recognize new people, troubled people, and those who just need a friend. As believers in Jesus, we need to take the time to help people wherever we are.

The old familiar hymn says, “I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together! All who follow Jesus, all around the world! Yes, we’re the church together!” It demonstrates that the buildings are not the church; the people are.

“We are the church together” emphasizes that the church is not a physical building, but a community of believers united in faith. All followers of Jesus belong to this collective body, regardless of their backgrounds.

At Pentecost, some people received the Holy Spirit and shared the Good News throughout the world with all who would hear it.

The Building and Grounds Team has successfully prepared the way for all who believe or want to come together to learn about Jesus, study scripture, grieve, or worship with other believers. Yes, we have buildings so that everyone who wants to come to our church has a place to do so. Besides buildings, we have provided technology that allows the board and teams to meet and makes the Sunday worship service available to all who want to view it live or later.

St Paul also provides a place for children to play soccer and for the KSU Wesley organization to meet in our Fellowship Hall. We host a community Trick or Treat gathering and a Back to School Blast to provide supplies to young people in our community, and we serve a meal at Hope House. As you can see, we are the church wherever we are in this beautiful world of ours.

Heavenly Father, thank you for all you do for us and with us as we reach out to others. Our church tries to do a lot for all who want to know you. Please be with our church as it sets out to do so much for our community through planned events that



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We Are the Church Continued from page 10)

allow so many to visit our church. Help us show others that all your people are the church. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

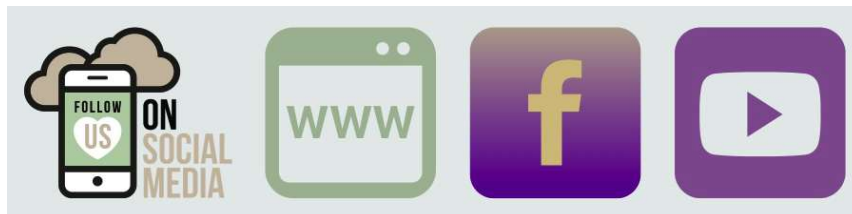
The Building and Grounds Team continues to carry out many activities at St Paul. The following are a few of the tasks the team has completed or has in progress.

- ☆ The church will hold the next Workday on October 10th.
- ☆ E-Smith serviced the Heating and Air at the parsonage on July 27th.
- ☆ My Georgia Plumber repaired a plumbing leak at the Parsonage. We purchased a service agreement that gives us a one-year warranty on the work and includes a flush of the hot water heater. The plumber flushed the hot water heater on Sept. 10th.
- ☆ We will need to replace some timbers near the book nook at the playground.
- ☆ Darrell had the gutters cleaned on both the Educational Building and Sanctuary.



**St. Paul Work Day —
October 10, 8:00 a.m.–noon**

Join us for our final Work Day of the year! We'll tackle a variety of indoor and outdoor projects, with jobs for every skill and ability. Bring any tools that may help with your chosen task, and come ready to support St. Paul. Questions or project ideas? Call Bob Trengove at 770-926-1078.



Where The Growing Begins

Victoria Godfrey

As we've journeyed through this year, we've been practicing the art of noticing more. That doesn't necessarily mean doing more; it means slowing down enough to see God at work in the ordinary moments of our lives. We've noticed God in the small things, in celebrations and challenges, in the people around us, and in the ways our faith



continues to grow. This month, I want to take that idea of noticing one step further: What happens when we start asking more questions?

Children and youth (and sometimes their teachers) are constantly trying to figure out life. They wonder why things happen, who they are becoming, where they belong, and what their faith has to do with everyday life. They ask questions adults sometimes take for granted: "Why does God allow hard things to happen? How do I know God is really with me? Why should I pray? What does it mean to be a good person? Does God really love everyone?"

We don't normally rush to answer these questions, but they're worth asking.

One of the most important things we can give our children and youth is a safe place to be curious. A place for them to wonder, to wrestle, to question, and even to say, "I don't know." Faith isn't about having every answer figured out. It's about learning to walk with God as we discover more along the way.

In our Children's Ministry, we make sure our kids know that their questions are welcome. We want them to see church as a place where they can bring their biggest questions, their smallest curiosities, and everything in between. Sometimes, a question can open our eyes to something we might have otherwise missed.

So, this October, let's notice more by wondering more. Let's listen when a child asks "why?" instead of quickly supplying an answer. Let's encourage our youth to explore their faith honestly. And let's remind them they don't have to have life—or faith—figured out yet.

Sometimes the questions themselves are where the growing begins. Because a faith that makes room for questions is a faith that keeps growing.

Discipleship Opportunities

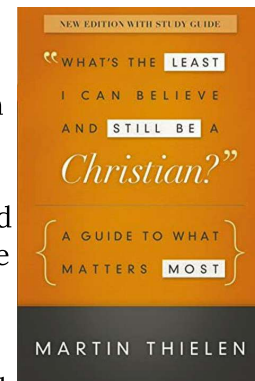
ChristWalk

What's the Least I Can Believe and Still Be a Christian?

Pastor and author Martin Thielen explores ten beliefs Christians need and ten they do not. In a lively, accessible style grounded in biblical scholarship, he reassures seekers and believers who question inherited assumptions. Christians need not believe sinners will be left behind to burn in hell, reject evolution, or read every biblical passage literally, though Scripture should always be taken seriously.

Thielen centers faith on Jesus: his life, teachings, death, resurrection, and vision for the world. These beliefs offer hopeful answers to life's deepest questions about God, meaning, fulfillment, suffering, and hope, presenting mainline Christianity with clarity, authenticity, and compassion.

See Shelia to obtain your book or Zoom link.



Zen and the Peace that Passes Understanding

Beginning October 18, you're invited to join the Open Door Class on Sundays at 9:45 a.m. as we explore common ground between Christianity and Buddhism and discover how both traditions can enrich and deepen our spiritual lives.



GRIEF SHARE

13-WEEK SUPPORT GROUP

Wednesdays,
August 5-October 28
6:00-7:30 PM (In person)
Cost: \$20.00

Contact Kathy Lim Sang for info
404.578.1241
kathylim10@gmail.com



LIFE LINE SCREENING®
The Power of Prevention

Monday, October 5
8:00 am-5:00 pm

- Call 1-800-324-9458
- Promo Code HABC001
- text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607
- or visit <https://llsa.social/HC>

www.stpaulumc.com

GriefShare®



Surviving the Holidays

Saturday, October 17
10:00 a.m. - Noon
In Person

Friday, October 23
6:00-8:00 pm Zoom

Loss of Spouse

Friday, October 30
6:00-8:00 pm Zoom



DRIVE-THRU TUESDAYS

Coffee & Blessing

Tuesdays in October
7 - 8:30 AM at SPUMC's
upper parking lot



www.stpaulumc.com



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4 9:45a SS 11a Worship 3p Staff	5 8a LifeLine 10:30a Monday Servants NO Chair Yoga 6p Stephen Ministry Training @ St Andrew	6 7a Coffee & Blessing 10a ChristWalk (FH) 7p ChristWalk (Zoom)	7 6p GriefShare	8 6p Stephen Ministry Training @ St Andrew	9	10 8a Church Work Day
11 LAITY SUNDAY 9:45a SS 11a Worship 2p UPfield Soccer	12 Banks Closed 11:30a Chair Yoga	13 7a Coffee & Blessing NO ChristWalk 10:30a Monday Servants	14 6p GriefShare	15 6p Stephen Ministry Training @ St Andrew 6:30p Stephen Ministry	16	17 10a Surviving the Holidays In-Person
18 9:45a SS 11a Worship 3p Leadership 2p UPfield Soccer	19 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga	20 7a Coffee & Blessing 10a ChristWalk (FH) 7p ChristWalk (Zoom)	21 6p GriefShare	22 6p Stephen Ministry Training @ St Andrew	23 6p Surviving the Holidays Bells Ferry Movie Night	24 4:30p Messy Church/Trunk or Treat
25 9:45a SS 11a Worship 2p UPfield Soccer	26 10:30a Monday Servants 11:30a Chair Yoga	27 7a Coffee & Blessing 10a Katherine & John Sapp (FH) 4p Hope House	28 6p GriefShare	29 6p Stephen Ministry Training @ St Andrew	30 6p Loss of a Spouse (Zoom)	31 Halloween

Serving This Month

October Servants

Worship Leader—Maureen Fleming
Open/Close Facilities—Louise Pomeroy

Monday Servants:

10/05 Darrell Morgan & Tom Short
 10/13 TU Tom Short & Ruth Castellaw
 10/19 Darrell Morgan & Marj Rhodes
 10/26 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."*

AUGUST 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

AUGUST 2026 Income

Contributions	\$13,611.00
Processing Gifts	\$30.20
Total Contributions	\$13,641.20
Rental Property	\$1,885.00
Soccer Rental	\$420.00
Total Revenue	\$15,946.20
Total Expenses for AUGUST	\$20,329.37
Net Total	(\$4,383.17)
YTD 2026 Income	\$162,859.55
TOTAL 2026 Expenses	\$156,328.00



05 Ruth Castellaw	01 Christine Heldreth
05 Jessica Moshglani	02 Doug Conley
06 Nancy Allen	07 Carol Preuss
06 Kari-Anne Martinez	12 Debbie Isbell
13 Sue Elam	
17 Samantha Ogene	
17 David Preuss	
20 Myra Morgan	
23 Kenneth Haile	
24 Kathy Lim Sang	



Altar Flowers



Cost: \$55.00

10/04 John Kone
 10/11 Available
 10/18 Myra Morgan
 10/25 Available

Sign up on Bulletin Board



October 19

SUGGESTED WORD COUNT: 350-400