



MISSION

To form faithful followers of Jesus Christ for the transformation of State College and the world.

VISION

MEETING new people
MAKING real relationships
MOVING into new expressions of love and service.



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NEXT DEADLINE:

February 12 at noon for the March 2025 newsletter

The Messenger

A publication of St. Paul's United Methodist Church & Wesley Foundation

February 2025

Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

-1 Corinthians 15:8-9

For the last month we have been practicing a mustard seed movement towards smallness, trying to notice the ways that the Gospel of Love is often less about the brightest and greatest, and more about the least and the last. From a tiny baby in a simple manger at Christmas, to the pinprick light of a single star on Epiphany; from a small family wedding to a very short sermon, we have been taking a subcompact micra ride into the ordinary nouns and verbs of our daily lives, only to discover those are the very places where love is born.

As we continue to reflect on these ideas, I am wondering how we connect them to our vision for the church. When we say out loud every week that we are called to make real relationships without agenda, part of what we are saying is that we want to be delivered from the delusion that our main goal in the church is to grow, or that our primary measure of success is attendance or giving or how we stack up against some other church. These capitalist tendencies can creep in and become an agenda for us, often without us even realizing it.

I wonder what the Gospel of Small Things has to say about this?

Early in Jesus' ministry we read about the people Jesus invited to follow him as his inner circle. If Jesus were trying to build a movement with measurable successes and marketable branding, we might imagine that he would select well-known folks, with reputable character and a circle of influence. Instead, Jesus chooses blue-collar, rough-around-the-edges fishermen. He chooses everyday people, leading what some might call "small" lives. Later in the story of the Church, when Paul is writing to some of the earliest Christians, he remarks that he is the very last of them all, because he had been one who had tried to persecute and kill Christ-followers. What kind of movement decides to take its biggest enemy and try to make him its spokesperson?

Friends, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of a Love that is stronger than death and that calls every single one of us beloved, is not as interested as we are in what the world would call successful, popular, or great. Time and time again God shows us that God is not interested in the size or success of things, but in the heart of them. God shows up in vulnerability as a tiny baby; God invites everyday people like you and I to be the church, not as salespeople for the next big thing, but as those who are called children of God. As we move through the rest of this winter, let us keep looking for ways we might be faithful to this invitation; for in the end, it is no small thing to be on this journey together.

Pastor Greg Milinovich

STAY CONNECTED!

St. Paul's sends out a regular email update, "What's Happening," with information about upcoming activities, mission and service opportunities, and worship services. Contact the Church Office today to receive these updates!

stpauls@stpaulsc.org



St. Paul's UMC
State College



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@StPaulsMusicSCE
@stpaulsshoebank



st.pauls.sc



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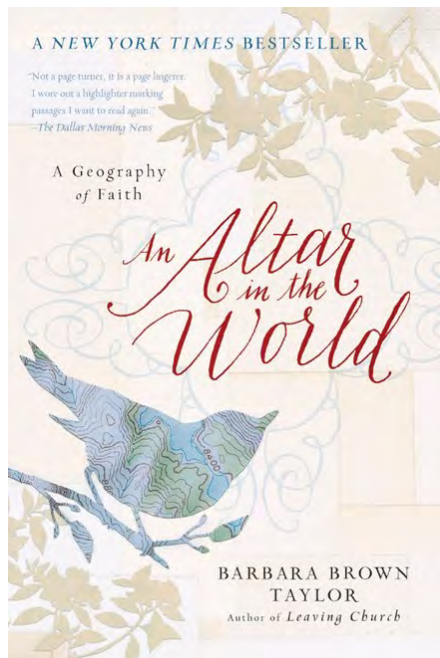


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Church Notes & Opportunities

* A Book for Lent

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 5. This year for our Lenten journey, we will be using Barbara Brown Taylor's book, *An Altar in the World*, as our companion text. The pastors will be using parts of this book each week in worship, and we would encourage your group to read through it during Lent, whether as a Sunday School class, a small group discussion, a couple friends meeting for coffee, or even on your own. *An Altar in the World* helps us to think beyond the typical spiritual practices we may feel obligated to try (and often inevitably fail at) during Lent. Taylor helps us to notice how the ordinary parts of our lives – the things we do to be alive – like walking, seeing, encountering others, and working, are actually spiritual practices that can help us encounter God in our lives.



* Part-Time Position Available

As you may have heard, Linda Heverly is retiring after nearly 28 years as our Administrative Assistant and Office Manager. We are so grateful for her decades of faithful service! Her departure leaves us with a need to hire a part-time administrative assistant/receptionist for the Church Office. If you are interested in learning more about this position, please email Pastor Greg (gmilinovich@susumc.org).

Thank you

to Linda Heverly

Linda Heverly has retired as of January 31, after nearly 28 years of faithful work in our church office. We are so grateful for Linda, her spirit of hospitality and welcome, her warmth, her efficiency and effectiveness, and the way her heart was always right there on her sleeve. Almost like another pastor in the church office, Linda has been an incredible gift to us for nearly three decades. If you would like to thank her, please send a note with your thoughts to the Church Office, and we will make sure it is delivered to her as she begins to enjoy her retirement.

✧ Food Bank Sundays

The first Sunday of each month is designated as Food Bank Sunday at St. Paul's. Check the "What's Happening" email for the current needs list. The Food Bank requests that you do not give baby food or formula, expired or opened products, products with alcohol in them, or over the counter medications. Drop off non-perishable donations in the bins at the College Avenue and Calder Way entrances to the Church.

✧ Women of Faith, Hope, and Love

Women of Faith, Hope, and Love (WFHL) is still meeting! If you are interested in joining, we gather on the third floor of the Education Building on Wednesday mornings at 9:30-11:30 am. Our current study book is *THRIVE*, a study about the Book of James. We began in September and are just now on chapter 3 of 6—we progress slowly! There are still two student books available. If you'd like to join us, contact the Church Office.



United Women in Faith

As we United Women in Faith move into being Bold for mission for 2025, let us remember to have a grateful new year.

Praise the Lord, Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Psalm 106:1 (NIV)

District UWF Spring Spiritual Enrichment Event: April 5 at Grace UMC, Philipsburg, PA.

Reading Program Discussion Group: February 10 at 1:30 pm on Zoom to discuss *Round Sleeper: Dr. Jim O'Connell's Urgent Mission to Bring Healing to Homeless People* by Tracy Kidder.

Executive Board Meeting: Monday in March 2025. More information to be announced.

Circles

Contact Circle leaders for the most current information.
All ladies are welcome to attend!

Deborah: Contact Virginia Flick for information.

Friendship: Contact Joanna Carlson for information (joannacarlson@gmail.com).

Mary and Martha: Contact Nancy Guild for information (njeg2@verizon.net).

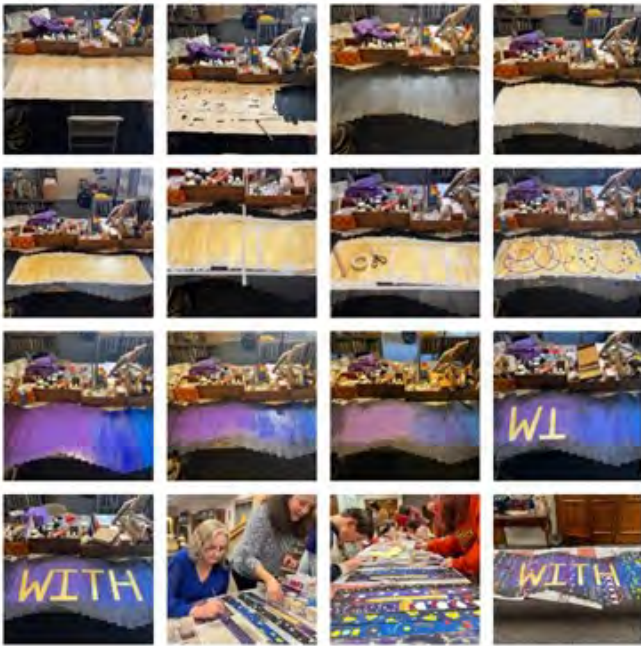
Ruth: February 13 at 11:30 am via Zoom. Nancy Silverman will talk about hope and how our rituals of faith can help us in these troubled times. Contact Peggy Hoover for more information (pxh6@psu.edu).

Have questions or need more information?
Contact Suzy Lutz (814-466-6389) or Virginia Flick (814-441-1743)

Church-Wide Advent Art Project

In December of 2024, the people of St. Paul's United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation once again collaborated on an art project. The Advent-themed blue and purple background of this piece, along with the word "With" was painted first, and then it was disassembled into 30 separate strips of wood. Each strip was given to a group of 2 or 3 people who didn't know one another well, who were invited to paint some sort of pattern or design on their strip. The

practice here was not only to paint, but to create with one another, as a way of embodying our Advent journey. As we took the weeks of Advent in the growing darkness to remember that God's way of being is being *with us* (Emmanuel!), we also learned that one of the ways we can practice this is by being with one another, and that when we are, we find that, indeed, *God is with us*. Come and see this piece hanging in the back of the sanctuary.



St. Paul's Youth Fellowship

Join us for SPYF each Sunday at 6:00 pm as the 6th-12th-graders of our church gather to grow closer to God and to one another through a fun evening of games, dad jokes, snacks, casual conversation, and deep discussion about where we see God in the world around us, and how God is inviting us to be people of love. Our main goal at SPYF is to be a safe space where we can grow in relationship with God and one another, and we do that each week by spending time together. But we need you to make our connection complete! We know that youth are busy with so many activities, but we would love to have you commit a couple hours each week for the sake of your own spiritual journey, and our own mutual benefit.



St. Paul's Care Ministries

Renee Schunk 814-237-2163 ext.152 rschunk@stpaulsc.org

Sometimes Valentine's Day Isn't Happy

For some people, Valentine's Day is a painful reminder of a broken relationship, the death of a loved one, a chronic illness, or another life challenge. If you are going through a difficult time, our Stephen Ministers can bring Jesus' love. Stephen Ministers provide confidential, one-to-one Christian care. They will meet with or call you, privately on a weekly basis to listen, to sup-



port and encourage you, to pray with and for you, and to walk with you during your struggle. To find out more about Stephen Ministry and how you or someone you know could be matched with a Stephen Minister, talk with Renee. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you!

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Life After Loss

St. Paul's UMC & Wesley Foundation will be offering Life After Loss, an educational support group designed for persons grieving the loss of a loved one through death. This course is recommended for adults, 18 years and up, who are experiencing a loss by death that occurred at least 3 months prior to the first session. Materials used for guiding the sessions are from hospice-recommended resources and cover the following:

- Introduction and Loss History
- Normal Grief Process
- Depression and Anger
- Guilt and Forgiveness
- Letting Go and Saying Goodbye
- Taking Care of Yourself — New Beginnings

This 6-week seminar will be held on Sundays:

March 23
 March 30
 April 6
 April 13
 (no session April 20)
 April 27
 May 4



The group will meet at 12:00-2:30 pm at St. Paul's in the Asbury Room/Library on the third Floor of the Church Building. Each session will begin with a light lunch. There is no charge for the sessions. **Registration is required.** Contact Renee by Monday, March 17 to reserve your spot.

St. Paul's Good Samaritan Fund

2023 Starting Balance	\$13,702.77
Donations	\$45,757.02
Support to Community	\$41,192.50
2024 Starting Balance	\$18,267.29
Donations	\$16,675.00
Support to Community	\$33,232.78
Current Balance	\$1,709.51

Thank you to everyone who has donated to the Good Samaritan Fund! Your generous gifts have enabled St. Paul's to assist those in our community to keep their apartments, get into new apartments, keep their electricity on, with medical needs, and with miscellaneous urgent needs. We have assisted with \$33,232.78 this year to date! With our balance now under \$2,000, and anticipated rising need, please consider donating to "The Good Sam Fund" to continue our financial assistance to our neighbors in need. Thank you!

Wesley Foundation & Campus Ministry

Sarah Voigt 814-238-6739 ext.139 svoigt@stpaulsc.org www.wesleypsu.org

4626 lbs. reclaimed food
18,817 students
575 hours open
3261 lbs. food pantry
55 volunteers

ABBA JAVA FALL 2024



Wesley's Closet's last open date for the 2024-25 season is February 1 at 9:00 am-12:00 pm. Throughout this winter season, we have given over 160 coats away to members of our community: children, students, and adults together! Thank you for being part of this work! If you have any coats to contribute (particularly adult coats), we would be SO grateful! Thank you!

Abba Java Up Late!

Come and join us in this ministry of presence with our student community. Yes, it's late BUT it's a lot of fun, I promise! There are two possible shifts, 9:30 pm-12:00 am and 12:00 am-2:30 am. The dates for the spring semester are:

February 28
March 28
April 25

You can sign up online (https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QIZYG2wiSUGZBVbbNaUZv4Yo6UFKOWEF0Os9S_SzyEE/edit?usp=sharing). If you have any questions, talk to Pastor Sarah.



To read more about the Wesley Foundation at Penn State, visit wesleypsu.org

Support Fair Trade Coffee Co-op at Abba Java

Last year for Spring Break, students from the Wesley Foundation, along with students from State College Presbyterian, traveled to the US/Mexico border in Douglas, AZ, and Agua Prieta, Mexico. In this border community, we partnered with Frontera de Cristo, a Presbyterian border ministry. While in Agua Prieta, we visited Cafe Justo, a fair trade coffee cooperative, which partners with Frontera de Cristo; Cafe Justo was created as an alternative for coffee migration for coffee farmers in Southern Mexico (read more at www.justcoffee.org). We had the opportunity to hear stories of their coffee farmers, watch the roasting of coffee, and taste many delicious cups of coffee. One way that Cafe Justo supports local coffee farmers is by churches, organizations, and individuals in the US buying their coffee at a fair price. During the week of March 17-21, Abba Java will serve Cafe Justo coffee. If you would like to order a pound (or two!) of coffee for yourself (\$12/pound), please contact Pastor Sarah by February 23.



Spring Break 2025: Hurricane Relief

Caring for our Neighbors in Western NC

March 8-15

Lutheran
at PENN STATE



info & registration



Cost: \$200 (includes transportation, lodging, and food)
scholarships available





Mission & Justice

Rwanda Update

Urukundo School Grows

There are few options for our 6th grade graduates. If you have money, your kids go to boarding school. With no money, you might attend three years of public school, grades 7-9, which are not good academically—or, you finish your education at 12-13 yrs old. Yes, at 12 years old. Our strategic plan has included building classrooms for grades 7-9 so more kids can live at home and continue their education. Land is being prepared with the goal of opening in September of 2025! To achieve this goal, funds continue to be raised for construction of classrooms, bathroom facilities, water tank, desks, textbooks, and all that is needed to successfully open. If you have questions, contact Carol Falke (falke248@gmail.com) or visit the website (hopemadereal.org).



Children's Ministry

Ted Voigt 814-380-2387 jtedvoigt@gmail.com

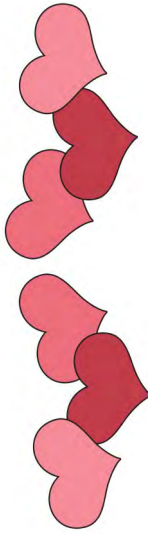
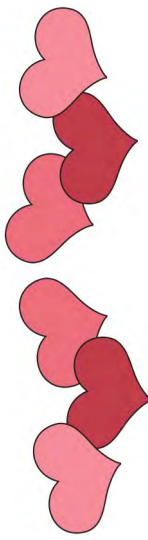
Sunday School Winter Curriculum

Our Celebrate Wonder curriculum quickly moved from Jesus's birth to his journeys to the temple, desert, and synagogue. In February, we will discuss the "wonder" of Jesus's actions as he heals people of different backgrounds with different ailments. Join us each Sunday morning at 9:00 am in the Christian Education building as we celebrate and wonder together.

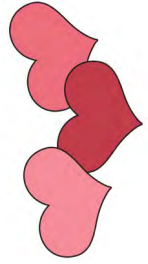
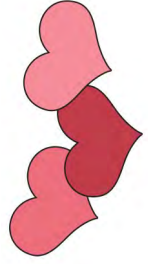
Hats & Mittens Mission Project

Thanks to everyone who donated to the hats/mittens mission project. We received more than enough donations to keep the preschool children warm this winter. Your generosity of something as small as a children's pair of mittens makes a big impact on those in need in our community. Thank You!

February 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>9:00a Children Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parent's Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 9:00a Worship with Communion 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship with Communion 11:30a 1st Sunday of the Month Lunch 11:30a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:00p Book Study: Cherished Belonging</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:00p Troop 31 Adult Leaders 6:00p Troop 31 Planning Meeting 7:00p Troop 31</p>	<p>5</p> <p>9:30a Women of Faith, Hope, & Love 10:00a Staff Meeting 5:30p Prayer Gathering 6:00p Pack 31 Den</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:00a Thursday Morning Small Group</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:30a Accountable Disciples</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:30a Walk To Emmaus 9:00a Shoe Bank 9:00a Wesley's Closet</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9:00a Children Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parent's Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 9:00a Worship with Communion 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>10</p> <p>7:00p Book Study: Cherished Belonging</p>	<p>11</p> <p>5:30p Finance Committee 7:00p PPRC 7:00p Troop 31</p>	<p>12</p> <p>9:30a Women of Faith, Hope, & Love 5:30p Prayer Gathering 7:00p Troop 31 Committee</p>	<p>13</p> <p>7:00a Thursday Morning Small Group 11:30a Ruth Circle</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:30a Accountable Disciples</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:30a Walk To Emmaus 9:00a Shoe Bank</p>
<p>16</p> <p>9:00a Children Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parent's Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 9:00a Worship with Communion 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>17</p> <p>7:00p Book Study: Cherished Belonging</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:00p Troop 31</p>	<p>19</p> <p>9:30a Women of Faith, Hope, & Love 10:00a Staff Meeting 5:30p Prayer Gathering 6:00p Pack 31</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:00a Thursday Morning Small Group</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30a Accountable Disciples</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:30a Walk To Emmaus 9:00a Shoe Bank</p>
<p>23</p> <p>9:00a Children Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parent's Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 9:00a Worship with Communion 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:30a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>24</p> <p>7:00p Church Council 7:00p Troop 31</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:00p Church Council 7:00p Troop 31</p>	<p>26</p> <p>9:30a Women of Faith, Hope, & Love 5:30p Prayer Gathering</p>	<p>27</p> <p>7:00a Thursday Morning Small Group</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:30a Accountable Disciples</p>	<p>29</p> <p>7:30a Walk To Emmaus 9:00a Shoe Bank</p>





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Pastors

Greg Milinovich
Sarah Voigt, Director of the Wesley Foundation

Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00 am-3:30 pm

Custodian Scheduled Hours

Monday - Friday 9:00 am -3:30 pm

The Messenger is a monthly newsletter. Articles must be 200 words or less. Please plan ahead! The submission deadline is the second Wednesday of each month at noon for the next month's issue (February 12 at noon for the March 2025 issue). Email mboffemmyer@stpaulsc.org.

Please note when submitting articles for St. Paul's Messenger: This publication appears on our website. If you prefer to keep your address and/or phone number private, please do not include them in your article. If a contact is necessary, you may refer people to the Church Office to get your contact information.