

The Messenger

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

March 2025

“Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the Lord.” -Jeremiah 23:24, NRSVUE

“(Christ) himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” -Colossians 1:17, NRSVUE

In the introduction to her book, *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor writes about the fairly popular ubiquitous self-designation in which folks declare that they are “spiritual, but not religious.” She wonders what is the scope of things people might mean by the word “spiritual,” and how whatever is meant by this word has so often been separated from what is bodily, “secular,” or ordinary. She suggests that claiming to be “spiritual” is often a shorthand way for people to say that they are looking for some deeper meaning, some higher truth, and some “treasure box of More.” She writes, “People seem willing to look all over the place for this treasure...The last place people look is right under their feet, in the everyday activities, accidents, and encounters of their lives.”



This reminds me of our standard operating procedure when it comes to Lent. Each year when Lent rolls around, we seem to be under the assumption that the best way to “practice a holy Lent” is to take on some extra (holy) practices, like fasting or praying more, or giving up some sort of vice or activity. While these sorts of things can be good, perhaps they reinforce the idea that encountering holiness, or God’s own presence and being, requires leaving our lives somehow. Whether consciously or not, we have come to believe that closeness to God means some sort of separation from our actual lives. After all, as Brown Taylor asks, “What possible spiritual significance could a trip to the grocery store have?”

This Lent, we intend to spend some time with this very question. Using *An Altar in the World* as a companion, we will encounter the texts that this lectionary year has to offer us: the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, the story of the Prodigal Son, Mary anointing Jesus, and of course the Palm Sunday Procession, and the holy week that follows. We will look at these stories not as ones who need to somehow step outside of our lives in order to experience Christ, but to discover the ways that Christ is present to us in our everyday practices, like going to the grocery store, seeing other people, being in our bodies, and even the simple act of breathing. Maybe we can discover together that our very lives are full-on invitations to experience the Spirit(ual) in all of it, in our bodies, in this very moment. Join us for the Lenten journey, beginning with Ash Wednesday, March 5.

Pastor Greg Milinovich

Check out Pastor Greg’s message about St. Paul’s First Sunday Lunch, page 4



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:

March 12 at noon for the April 2025 newsletter

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



@SPWFUMC
@abbajavacoffeehouse
@StPaulsMusicSCE
@stpaulsshoebank



st.pauls.sc



venmo

Church Notes & Opportunities

* A Thank You from Park Forest Preschool

Dear St. Paul's United Methodist Church,

On behalf of the Park Forest Preschool staff and board members, we send our sincere thanks for the hats and mittens donated to our children's holiday boxes. We greatly appreciated the gifts to our children and their grateful families. Again, thank you for your continued generosity to our program

Sincerely,

Ana Butler
Park Forest Preschool
Board Member

* Financial Report

St. Paul's 2024 year-end financial report shows total income of \$893,639 with expenses of \$864,409. During the year, regular contributions from the Trustees, taken from the rental income on Building #4 (Locust Lane), were included in our total income. However, our 2024 year-end expenses totaled only \$864,409. Thus, the Trustee contribution was returned to them and our income still exceeded expenses by \$29,230. While our income was about 2% below budget, our expenses were about 8% below budget. Designated benevolent income, including the Good Sam Fund and all local, state, and national causes was \$75,590. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Sam Bonsall (sam.bonsall@gmail.com) or Lou Geschwindner (lfg@psu.edu).

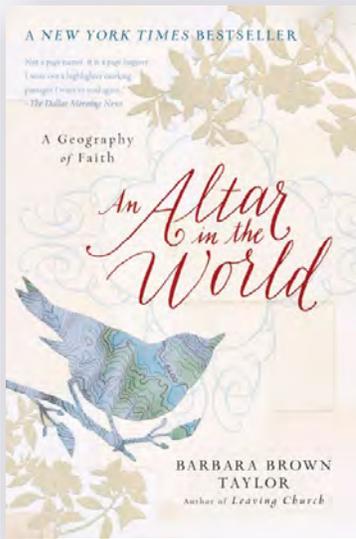
* 100th Birthday Card Shower

Emmie Bence will be 100 years old on Thursday, March 13! Help her celebrate this wonderful milestone with a card or note. Send to Emmie Bence at:

500 E. Marylyn Ave. Apt L202
State College, PA 16801



✧ 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. In *An Altar in the World*, Taylor helps us to think beyond the typical spiritual practices we may feel obligated to try (and often inevitably fail at) during Lent. She helps us to notice how the ordinary parts of our lives—the things we do just to be alive—like walking, seeing, encountering others, and working, are actually spiritual practices that can help us to encounter God in our lives.

✧ Welcome New St. Paul's Staff Members!

We are excited to announce the addition of two new members to the St. Paul's United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation staff! Deb Dormady will soon be starting as a part time Office Administrator, and Liz McMillan will soon be starting as our part-time Director of Children's Ministry. Both Deb and Liz will bring a wealth of energy and passion to our team and will help us as we continue to draw the circle wide by meeting, making, and moving. Hear from them in their own words, below, and be sure and offer them a word of welcome and blessing when you see them!



Deb Dormady

My connections to St. Paul's United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation began as a volunteer at Abba Java. I quickly understood that the commitment to building relationships and serving others was at the heart of everything. I am excited to join a team that strives to create a community of love, compassion, and caring for all. In my 34-year career, I served as a clinical social worker for adolescents across multiple environments. In addition to my direct work, I served as the leader of an alternative high school program and the Director of Special Education for a public school district.



Liz McMillan

For 13 years, I was able to combine two of my lifelong passions, swimming and education, into a career as a collegiate swim coach. In 2015, after coaching for 7 years at Penn State, I stepped away from the pool deck to be a full-time stay-at-home mom with my two sons and husband, Colin. Being able to learn and play alongside Kieran and Nolan when they were so young was one of my biggest joys in life. With the boys getting older, I have been looking for my next big adventure and am delighted to join the St. Paul's UMC and Wesley Foundation staff! From a young age, I have always been drawn to working with children, so walking with the youngest members of St. Paul's as they explore God's love for them and all in this world is an exciting challenge on which I feel ready to embark!

Why We Gather: First Sunday of the Month Lunch

I once had a seminary professor who said that the main practices of Christianity were having a meal together, and washing the dishes. You can draw your connections with the sacraments of the eucharist (Holy Communion) and baptism, but one thing feels very true to me: when we gather around the table for communion, and we taste the bread and swallow the juice, we are practicing something that is so ordinary that we risk the danger of missing it altogether. We have focused so much on the mystery of it that we have forgotten the beautiful ordinariness of it. When we gather together at any table, anywhere—for staff donuts, family dinner, or a church potluck—we are being the church in a particularly holy and sacramental way!

Which is why we gather for a potluck lunch on the first Sunday of every month. It is no accident that the first Sunday is also the day we share in Holy Communion together at both of our worship services. It's as if, having practiced it in the sanctuary, we move to the social room and try it more fully. Whether we have pulled pork and several kinds of cole slaw, or breakfast casseroles, or some impeccably prepared baked goods by master bakers in training, we are experiencing a kind of Holy Communion together that is no less a part of what it means to be the church than our worship service is.

At our most recent First Sunday of the Month Lunch in February, I interviewed several folks about what draws them to this monthly meal, and I got so many interesting answers. Mary Beth, Marcia, and Caitlin all used the word “community.” Ray added that sitting with others at a table gives you a bit more time than most other ways we have in the church to actually get to know someone. Art chimed in, saying, “I just met a new person today!” At that table, we were meeting and moving, as new people were being met and real relationships were being formed with more than just a handshake and a “how are you,” but with some actual conversation.

Abigail said she loves talking with friends, and trying all the different foods. Several others agreed with her, like Kathy, who says she loves trying new foods and

loves the themes we have each month; and Stephanie, who says she loves to bake but doesn't want to eat it all at home and is grateful to have people to bake for! I talked to so many people, as I walked around the room, who were so grateful that we do this: Simon said we should keep doing it; Dave said it is so important for us to get together in this way; Quin said it is way better than eating at home alone; and Barb said it is an incredible opportunity to get to know others better.

I think I was most moved by one comment in particular. Jack, who is also the chairperson of our Church Council and involved in so many different ways, said, “This is why I come to church: to meet people and share food.” I agree, Jack. It's just like my seminary professor taught me all those years ago. Church isn't so much about making sure we believe all the right things, or show up for enough Sundays to check an accomplishment box. Nope. It's really all about washing up and eating together, discovering God with us right there with the fruit salad, the fudge brownies, and the old and new friends.

We hope you will cook up something yourself, or just bring your appetite and your willingness to show up in this way, and join us for an upcoming First Sunday of the Month Lunch. It is one important way for us to be the church together.

-Pastor Greg





Join us for SPYF each Sunday evening at 6:00 pm as the 6th-12th graders of our church gather each week 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.

Confirmation, for all 9th-12th grade students who have not been previously confirmed, will be held over three Saturdays this Spring (March 29, May 3, and May 17) with Confirmation occurring on Sunday, June 1. If you are interested in learning more or being a part of this year's confirmation journey, please contact Pastor Greg as soon as possible (gmilinovich@susumc.org).



United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith being Bold for Mission in 2025

District UWF Spring Spiritual Enrichment Event: April 5 at 9:00 am at Grace UMC, Philipsburg. Theme: The Blessings of Friendship.

Reading Program Discussion Group: March 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. More information to be announced.

Circles

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

Deborah: No meeting in March. Contact Virginia Flick for information.

Friendship: Contact interim leader Virginia Flick for information.

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

Ruth: March 13 at 11:30 am, we will have a *Response* day where ladies will have the opportunity to share about what they've been reading in *Response* magazine. 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)



Mission & Justice

Rwanda Update

Construction of the secondary school progresses with the leveling of the land and building of retaining walls—all done by hand. Many hands means many jobs! This school will allow our 6th-grade graduates the option of living at home while continuing their education, a much more affordable option.

Students share what furthering their education will mean to them:

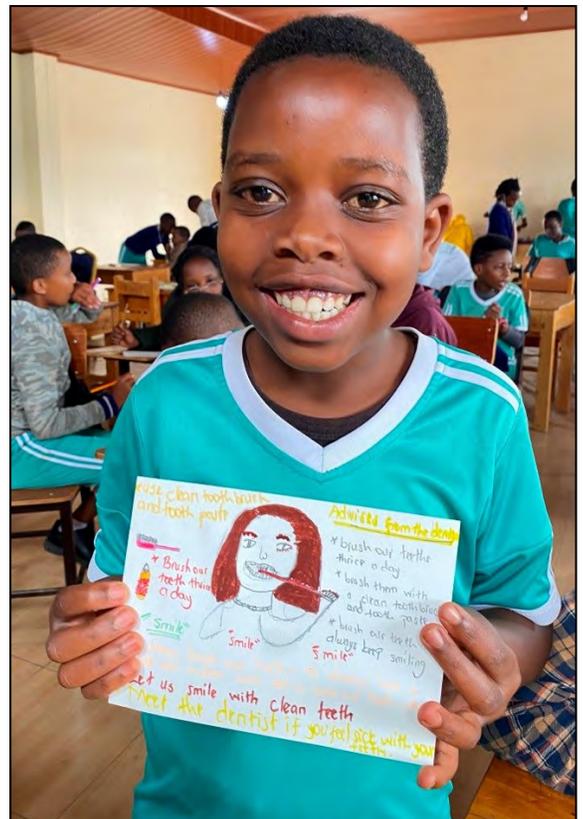
- “I dream of becoming an engineer to work on making planes safe because my grandfather died in a plane crash”
- “I want to be a scientist to discover vaccines to keep our country healthy”
- “I want to farm to grow food for my family and my community”

HOPE MADE REAL

To find out more about Hope Made Real, contact Carol Falke (falke248@gmail.com) or visit the website (hopemadereal.org).

Nicaragua Scholarship Mission

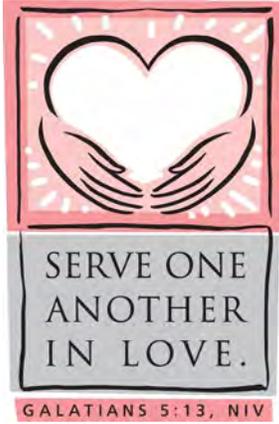
Your support has helped to provide 1,511 scholarships for students to attend technical schools, universities, or Christian schools, and 12,278 backpacks or bags of school supplies have been handed out over those 20 years. Please help Nicaraguan children to live a better life through education. Mail or drop off your check, made out to St. Paul’s with 24205 in the memo line, to our Church Office and make a difference in the life of a child.





St. Paul's Care Ministries

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



Good Samaritan Fund

St. Paul's Good Samaritan Fund is running low. Won't you help us to love our neighbors with financial assistance for basic needs, such as rent to prevent eviction, and electricity assistance to prevent shut-offs? Just send your check—made out to St. Paul's, with "Good Sam Fund" written in the memo line—to the Church Office. Thank you for supporting those in need in our community!

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 Renaë by Monday, March 17 to reserve your spot.

It's Okay to Be Human

An important theme of the Lenten season is the humanity of Christ. Jesus experienced times of loneliness, sadness, hurt, anger, disappointment, grief, and abandonment. That is part of being human. Another part of being human is needing help from each other. God never intended us to be completely self-sufficient. Part of God's plan is for each of us to turn to others for help when we need it. So when you are experiencing difficult times, don't struggle alone. Our Stephen Ministers will walk with you, listen to you, encourage you, pray with you, and provide confidential one-to-one care to help you through tough times. Stephen Ministers can bring the love of Jesus back into your life. To find out more about Stephen Ministry and how you or someone you know could be matched with a Stephen Minister, talk with Renaë. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you!



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Wesley Foundation & Campus Ministry

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

Lent 2025: Bake and Pray

baker or not, unsure of how to pray, or what Lent even means -- come and join with us as we use baking as a tangible practice, to guide us, ground us, and shape our lives!

student dinner

when? wednesday nights, 6pm
where? abba java coffeehouse
what? undergrad + grad students gather to share a meal, make friends, & practice faith

“

I have learned that I carry my heart on my sleeve and Abba Java has made that clear to me. Community is important to me, as well as showing others that they are certainly loved and always welcome. Into my next steps, I hope I carry the memory of my friendships I made and remember that love can be found in the simplest of exchanges, like passing coffee and food.

Marissa Lewis
2023-25 intern

”

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





Through Wesley's Closet I have learned how to serve various members of the community who come from various countries, backgrounds, and situations with grace and dignity. I realized that sometimes, just being present and helping with simple tasks, like picking out a coat, can make a world of difference in someone's life.

Leah Chung
2024-25 intern



ST. PAUL'S UMC & WESLEY FOUNDATION

WESLEY'S CLOSET 2024-25



80 Children
112 Adults/Students

200 coats (light + winter)
153 winter accessories
(hats, gloves, scarves)
552 pairs of socks & underwear

"earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

ASHES TO GO: ON CAMPUS
WED, MARCH 5TH
(look for us near the forum building)





Children's Ministry

Ted Voigt

814-380-2387

jtedvoigt@gmail.com

Sunday School Spring Curriculum

During Lent, which begins on March 5, we continue our journey with Jesus as he joins his disciples for the Last Supper, prays in the Garden, and is denied by Peter. Join us each Sunday morning at 9:00 am in the Christian Education Building, as we celebrate and wonder together!



SPRING BREAK

**There will be no Sunday School
for children and youth on
March 9, due to Spring Break**

Lenten Mission Project: Easter Baskets for Park Forest Preschoolers

Let's share our love of Jesus with the children who attend Park Forest Preschool by giving them an Easter Basket! The preschool has requested that the baskets be identical, so we are collecting a \$10 donation to sponsor a child. Donate online (<https://stpaulsc.ccbchurch.com/goto/forms/270/responses/new>) or put your donation in the offering plate designated for "Preschool Easter Baskets." Any questions? Contact Cindy Regel (cindy.h.regel@gmail.com or 814-880-6794).



March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>9:00a Worship with Communion Children's Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parents' Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship with Communion 11:30a 1st Sunday of the Month Lunch 11:45a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>6:00p Troop 31 Adult Leaders 6:00p Troop 31 Adult Planning 7:00p Book Conversation 7:00p Troop 31 7:00p Troop 31 PLC</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Ash Wednesday 9:30a Women of Faith, Hope, & Love 10:00a Staff Meeting 5:30p Prayer Gathering 6:00p Pack 31 Den 7:00p Ash Wednesday Service</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:00a Thursday Morning Small Group</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:30a Accountable Disciples</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7:30a Walk To Emmaus 9:00a Shoe Bank</p>
<p>9</p> <p>9:00a Seekers & Servants 10:00a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:45a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>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 Worship with Communion Children's Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parents' Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:45a Worship Discussion 3:00p Forum Sunday School</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:00p Book Conversation 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 Worship with Communion Children's Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parents' Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:45a Worship Discussion 12:00p Life After Loss (LAL) Class 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>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 8:00a Confirmation Class 9:00a Shoe Bank</p>
<p>30</p> <p>9:00a Worship with Communion Children's Sunday School 9:00a Youth Sunday School 9:00a Parents' Sunday School 9:00a Seekers & Servants 10:30a Live & Livestreamed Worship 11:45a Worship Discussion 12:00p Life After Loss (LAL) Class 3:00p Forum Sunday School 6:00p SPYF</p>	<p>31</p> 					



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The Messenger is a publication of
St. Paul's United Methodist Church and Wesley Foundation

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www.wesleypsu.org

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 (March 12 at noon for the April 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.