



# The Steeple

A Publication of St. Paul United Methodist Church  
of Rosewood Heights, Illinois



**DECEMBER 2015**

*“He’s making a list, checking it twice. Going to find out who’s naughty and nice.  
Santa Claus is coming to town.”*

Even for those of us who are not list makers, Christmas forces us to make lists so everything gets done. We want to make sure that we get the right toy or have the right clothing size for those on our presents’ list. The Christmas concerts, cookie walks, craft fairs, Christmas parties, and family gatherings need to be placed upon our crowded calendars.

In the booklet, *Walking the Road to Bethlehem: Your Journey to Christmas*, Adam Hamilton makes the observation that *“though we’ve extended the season of Christmas, we have moved further and further from the meaning of Christmas.”* When I was shopping at *Dollar General* last week, I noticed the Halloween candy and decorations were on sale and they were stocking those shelves with Christmas decorations. 102.5 FM in St. Louis is already playing Christmas music all day.

While we make our Christmas lists, I am challenging all of us to make a list of how we are preparing our hearts for Christmas. The early church believed God coming in the flesh to us is so important that we should set aside the four weeks before to contemplate the meaning of Jesus’ birth. Hamilton says: *“Since sometime in the late fifth or early sixth century, this [Advent] season has been a time to recall the meaning of Christmas. The word Advent is from the Latin adventus, and it means “coming.” Christians use this opportunity both to recall Jesus’ coming to the earth as a babe in Bethlehem and to prepare themselves for his promised return to earth.”*

We are in the midst of the Advent season and a new sermon series on Sundays at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m., *The Amazing Emmanuel*, which reminds us Jesus is the real superhero in our lives. It is because of Jesus’ life, death, & resurrection that we enjoy the good life God intended for all of us to live.

Our Christmas Dinner on Sat., Dec. 5th at 6 p.m. is a time for us to sit down for a meal with our church family. Chef Bob Brown is providing a great meal. After we eat, the children and youth will retell the story of the first Christmas with the play, *Sleepover At The Stable*.

Our annual Christmas Cantata on Sun., Dec. 20th will tell at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. the story of the promised Messiah who has come to save us. Join us for this cantata, *The Christmas Promise*, sung by our Worship Choir and directed by Eldon Wold, Jr. On this same Sunday is *March to the Manger*: an opportunity to bring our Christmas gifts and lay them down at the feet of the baby Jesus. (A family from our church portrays the Holy Family.)

On Christmas Eve, we offer two worship services: a Family Service at 5 p.m. and a Traditional Candlelight/Communion Service at 7 p.m. God seems especially near to us on this Holy Night.

The Awakening Services on Saturdays: Dec. 12, 19 and 26 at 5 p.m. will offer opportunities to sing carols and new Christmas music as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child.

These are a few of the many events at St. Paul that are offered to help your family prepare for the coming of Jesus into our world. There are many other opportunities for the remembrance of this event throughout this newsletter!

In his book, Hamilton says: *“Jesus is a flesh-and-blood reminder that God walks with us, suffers with us, loves us, has redeemed us, and offers us eternal life. John Wesley, as he lay dying in his chambers near the New City Road Chapel, put it this way: “The best of all is, God is with us.”*

*I can face anything if I know that God is with me. That promise is part of the gift of Christmas: Emmanuel, God with us.”*

As we prepare for Christmas during this Advent season, let us make room in our hearts for the greatest gift of all: Emmanuel, God with us. Pastor Daryl





### GINGERBREAD HOUSE TIME!

Children of all ages are invited to stay after 10:30 a.m. service on **December 20** to enjoy a pizza lunch and an opportunity to decorate a gingerbread house. **Reservations** are requested and there is a sign-up sheet in the Education wing on the big bulletin board. Bring your friends! **No cost!** Parents are welcome for lunch and building. Houses will be pre-made from graham crackers. **Candy donations** are requested and a box is provided. A list of the types of candy that work best is by the box.



### COAT AND SHOE COLLECTION FOR CHILDREN

During October & November you gave 26 coats, 10 pairs of shoes, and 10 lightweight jackets. On behalf of the children who received these items the Outreach Ministry Team and Riverbend Head Start & Family Services thanks you.



#### TO YOU...WITH LOVE, by Rev. Avis Richardson

A strange encounter with a blessing was mine last Tuesday morning. About 10 a.m. a motorcycle became disabled outside my front door. It was soon joined by a car that had been following it to their home in Midway. Seeing their dilemma, I went out to offer them a place to park it in my yard.

As they made ready to leave, the woman asked me where I had come from and to both our surprise and pleasure, we discovered that some 40 years ago we had lived in the same subdivision. I was right across the street from her brother and my son had played with her nephews. Our kids had gone to the same schools and we spoke of mutual friends of our yesterdays. A real "blast from the past" moment.

One never knows who may stop as our doorway. The joy is to try to make everyone who comes your way feel special. I'm sure there was nothing too religious about our meeting but it was just the makings of a good day— and after all, good days always seem to have their own excitement and an opportunity to give and receive.

One day I opened the doorway of my heart and found God was also stopping by. He does you know, in surprise visits. God Bless!

(Used with permission from the Staunton newspaper...man on the motorcycle was Carol Warner's son-in-law; woman in the car was Carol Warner!)

### DECEMBER - Church of Rock (COR) Youth



#### News

Psalm 136:26

"Give thanks to the God of heaven, for His steadfast love endures forever."

**Youth meet on Sundays @6:30 p.m. at SPUMC in the Youth Room!**

**Contact Kevin Rader at (618) 303-0044 for other DECEMBER info!**

### Christmas Crafts & Cookie Walk Festival

Sat., Dec. 5th 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



**Join us for this fun fund raiser For Mission Possible! Santa Clause is going to make a visit! Lots of fun for the family!**



## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- We rejoice in the birth of **Corinne Marie Crandall**, daughter of Cory & Caroline Crandall, on Nov. 7, 2015. Grandparents are Debbie & Ross Eggebrecht, Bill Kasten, and Vance & Dana Crandall. Great-grandparents are Chuck & Rosalie Toner. Very Special Aunt is Andrea Kasten. Congratulations everyone!
- Congratulations to our newest **Eagle Scout, Andrew Studnicki**. The Eagle Scout Court of Honor was held on Sun., Nov. 15th. Brenda, his mother, shared during a worship service that Andrew's first contact with St. Paul was at 4 yrs. old when he received a St. Paul bear in the emergency room at Alton Memorial Hospital. It was only after they had been in Boy Scout Troop 777 that they made the connection of the bear to our church. Their family is so appreciative of the excellent scouting program that we sponsor.
- We send our deepest sympathy to these families. The family of **Kevin McRae**; the family of **Janice Evans**, stepdaughter of Alice Burrows; the family of **Charles Kelly**, brother/brother-in-law of Iola & Larry Ballard; and the family of **Susan Derricott Kokos**, friend of Lois Mitchell.
- **Thank you for all who helped in anyway with the three day visit of the Ugandan Kids Choir.** Whether you contributed to housing or feeding or transporting or praying, your part was very important. The children and the adults working with them are amazing people and we pray that God continues to do incredible things through them. May He also bless their travels and keep them safe. A **Love Gift Offering of \$1,651.59** from our three services was raised for the work of the Ugandan Kids Choir and **7 children** were newly sponsored!
- **Boy Scout Troop 777**, chartered by St. Paul, collected 6,651 cans of food on Saturday, Nov. 21 for the local food pantries. What a hard working group of young men! And may God bless all the Organization, Companies, and individuals who offered to help replace the tires and rims that were recently stolen off their trailer. People are incredible!
- The Roxana High School Nov. 20-22 fall play, *Arsenic And Old Lace*, featured **Oliver Bacus, Sydney Martin**, and **Brendan Palmer** in the cast; and **Debbie & Mark Bacus** in the production Staff. What a wonderful group of talented people! Congratulations on a job well done!
- Congratulations to our sixth graders who were presented Study Bibles on Bible Sunday, Nov. 29: **Piper Martin, Lana Cox, Clayton Bunt, Marlo Schiber, Tyler Cameron, Logan Oertle, Payton Hartman, Taylor Scroggins, Brynleigh Mormino, Peyton Mormino, Emily Hall, Kamryn Bell, Madelaine Ramirez**, and **Morgann Ramirez**. May you learn and grow in the Lord as you read your Bible.
- We **thank the Worship Ministry Team** for decorating the church so beautifully for Christmas. Your efforts have enhanced our celebration of this holy season.

---

## THANK YOU!

**THANK YOU:** Thank you to everyone for the cards, the calls, and especially the visits from Pastor Daryl, Eileen, and Doug. All is greatly appreciated! God Bless—**Chuck & Rosalie Toner**

**THANK YOU:** Thank you to Pastor Daryl for his visits and thank you to everyone for all the prayers and cards. Therapist says that all is going well! God Bless—**Jerry & Cathy Cameron**

**THANK YOU:** Thank you to the pastors, former MYF youth, and former members for your generous gifts and notes sent toward the Mission Possible: Capital Fund Campaign! It is great to know that your time at St. Paul UMC still holds an important place in your life.



### Saturdays at St. Paul in DECEMBER 5:00 P.M. Service



Join us on SATURDAYS at 5 p.m. for Awakening! Awakening is St. Paul's newest worship service featuring the Awakening Praise Band in a family friendly setting. We hope you will join us (bring your family, friends, & neighbors) as we praise God & celebrate what the Holy Spirit has done!

#### Our DECEMBER Speakers:

5th - Cancelled for the Christmas Dinner & Play    12th - Jason McAtee CONCERT!  
19th - Lindsey Rader & Ryan Tite    26th - Pastor Daryl Fansler

### Sundays at St. Paul in DECEMBER 8:15 & 10:30 A.M. Services

*“More Jesus Time” for Pre-school - 5th grade and a Nursery is provided for the 10:30 a.m. service.*

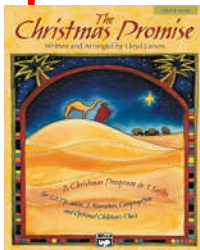
**6: 2nd Sunday of Advent. Communion celebrated.** One of the reasons that comics are so popular is because they tell stories quickly and colorfully. And though the underlying plot is usually pretty much the same, each strip has its own twists and turns. Maybe this is one of the reasons God chose to announce the news about His Son’s birth to the shepherds. God knew they would tell others about their experience in a simple and straightforward manner, but also with a certain wide-eyed wonderment! This Christmas, we’ll see if we can come up with our own version of the Christ child’s importance in our lives. *Read Luke 2:8-20. The sermon series continues: The Amazing Emmanuel: Following the True Hero for All Time.*



**13: 3rd Sunday of Advent. Birthday Sunday.** Superheroes remain in vogue only as long as devoted fans keep their stories alive. Think about it—how popular will any of them be a century from now? Now, think about Jesus. It is mighty Caesar Augustus who is forgotten (except as part of the Christmas story) while Jesus is worshiped as the Savior throughout the world. Because of the Resurrection, Jesus’ legacy lives on. *Read Galatians 4:4, Luke 2:1-2. The sermon series continues: The Amazing Emmanuel: Following the True Hero for All Time.*



**20: 4th Sunday of Advent. Cantata Sunday. March to the Manger. Cradle Roll Sunday.** We invite you to join us during the 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. services for the cantata, *The Christmas Promise*. *It is a St. Paul tradition to celebrate March to the Manger during both worship services. As a family from our church portrays the holy family, you are invited to come forward and lay your Christmas offering at the feet of the baby Jesus. If you wish to wrap your gift, you may do so. Your Christmas offering may be given for any project, mission or missionary supported by St. Paul. Undesignated offerings go to support the General Budget. During both services, we also celebrate Cradle Roll Sunday: blessing the children born since last Christmas. This is a time of thanksgiving and celebration for the new life in our midst.*



**27: 1st Sunday after Christmas.** Comic books don’t pay much attention to the endangered people rescued by superheroes; they favor the ongoing battle between the Superhero and Arch Villain. In real life, reporters like to interview people rescued from tragedies. We want to know the thoughts and feelings of people fortunate enough to survive. The great testimony of the Church is that the Amazing Emmanuel still comes to the rescue of people whose lives appear headed for trouble. All that we are, we owe to Jesus! *The sermon series concludes: The Amazing Emmanuel: Following the True Hero for All Time.*

**January 3, 2016: Epiphany Sunday.** We celebrate the Wise Men who showed up at Jesus’ house, ready to worship Him. May we be wise men and women who continue to show up every Sunday, ready to worship Jesus. Doug Pascoe, our Parish Visitor, brings the message today!

**Nurses Notes for DECEMBER 2015 from Parish Nurse, Eileen Cheatham RN, BC, B.S.N.!**

"Off to one side sits a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. God goes to those who have time to hear him—and so on this cloudless night He went to simple shepherds." ~Max Lucado~

What a glorious night that must have been for those simple shepherds. As you know, shepherds were considered the lowliest on the social ladder- and because of their occupation were not even allowed in the synagogue as they were ceremonial unclean. The shepherds really did not deserve a visit and an invitation from God- but neither do we. We are just as unclean in our own sinful nature. Yet God, in His love and mercy bowed low to meet us. He came low to get down to where we are, that He might pick us up, change us, and to one day take us to where He is. This is the reason to have great joy!

We live in a sinful broken world. Last month in Paris, we saw again what men, filled with hate and darkness, can do to others. People fear for their safety, their families, and loved ones in the military. They are afraid due to a loss of health or a job situation, or perhaps fear of the future and the unknown. But the situations in this present world and our personal lives should not steal our joy- especially the joy we have at Christmas.

We have the Lord to provide for all of our needs. Trust that He will give resources and strength to meet what comes our way. To live in such fear and anxiety is like living in a prison. The Lord is competent, the Lord is caring, the Lord is always in control of each and every situation- even the ones that we do not understand. Be joyful that God is in control!

There may not be peace in the world, but we have something far better: we have peace **with** God. Nothing can undo the relationship we have with Him. It is permanent and forever. Be joyful that the message of Christmas and Christ's love was a personal message just for you!

We also have the peace **of** God. It comes as we do the will of God in our daily lives and deny sin and the flesh through God's power. The peace of God comes through obedience to do His will each day and deny sin each day through His power. We sometimes fail miserably but that's okay- His mercies are new each day!

What joy we can have this Christmas! This Good News and joy must be shared. Christmas should draw us together to tell the world's greatest story once again, and share true fellowship.

What joy we can know when, in the spirit of Christ, we exercise the same prerogative that God exercised in sending His only Son to the world, the prerogative of forgiveness and reconciliation. The grace that we choose to extend to others is available to us without limits! Christmas affords a stern reminder that people we have left in the cold could have a warm place with us around the Christmas tree if we were only willing to be more like the One we celebrate. How can we truly celebrate the One but hold on to past hurts, anger, and resentment? There is freedom in the joy of Christmas!

The Christmas season affords an opportunity to rid the heart of sadness and gloom. Hope brightens and whitens all that it touches. The Bethlehem manger is much, much more than a historical milestone; it is an unfolding promise to all who believe. Jesus is the Gift who keeps on giving. The Christian can rejoice in things eternal, even when temporal circumstances are difficult.

The joy of Christmas is to be found in a spirit of love and generosity. While we should not be carried away with excessive shopping and pride-driven spending, we should exercise generosity in deed and spirit as a true celebration of Jesus. Remember that the gift is always a token of the heart. Most gifts are soon broken, used and forgotten, but a loving, giving heart endures the tests of time.

Don't let the Christmas season pass us by like a pagan holiday. Let's truly celebrate Christ, the greatest gift ever given. Make your holiday a joyous day! Add another seat or two at your table. Set free whatever grudges or ill will you would hold on to. Sing the carols at the top of your voice. Tell Christ's story with thanksgiving and wonder. Wrap every present in love. *You* are the reason Jesus came. No one has more cause to celebrate than you do!

**Work of Christmas Begins**

"When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with the flocks,  
then the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost, to heal those broken in spirit,  
to feed the hungry, to release the oppressed, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among all peoples,  
to make a little music with the heart..."

And to radiate the Light of Christ, every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.

Then the work of Christmas begins. ~Howard Thurman~

May the joy of Christ, our greatest gift, fill our hearts this season and in the coming year!  
Eileen





# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

*“Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work!”*

December 01 Chiles, Harvey  
 December 01 Gowan, Amy  
 December 01 Schlemer, Bobbie Jean  
 December 02 Ortegren, Al  
 December 04 Harlan, Sandy  
 December 05 Sparling, Meghan  
 December 05 Voorhees, Laura  
 December 06 Poore, Jerry  
 December 06 Rader, Lindsey  
 December 08 Davis, Tammy  
 December 08 Blacklock, Will  
 December 10 Michels, Earline  
 December 10 Ramirez, Erika  
 December 10 Adams, Reid  
 December 11 Harris, Ruth  
 December 11 Fennewald, Claire  
 December 12 Kasinger, Dorothy  
 December 13 Gwaltney, Jamie  
 December 13 Cameron, Jon  
 December 13 Myers, Elise  
 December 14 Liedtke, Mike  
 December 15 Duryea, Dan  
 December 15 Sullivan, Becky  
 December 15 Giddings, Jessica  
 December 15 Eyster, Devin

December 16 Helmkamp, Rick  
 December 16 Palmer, Stephanie  
 December 16 Wells, Emily  
 December 16 Hart, Elaine  
 December 18 Ford, Joan  
 December 19 Brown, Gary  
 December 19 Adams, Heather  
 December 19 Parker, Megan  
 December 19 Cruthis, Kailynne  
 December 20 Cloninger, Wayne  
 December 20 Champa, Jenn  
 December 20 Hendricks, Brody  
 December 24 Kainz, Steve  
 December 24 Brown, Ben  
 December 24 Harlan, Kaydence  
 December 24 Harlan, Kristina  
 December 26 Ford, Don Sr.  
 December 28 Babcock, Orisa  
 December 28 Ross, Madilyn  
 December 29 Basden, Bill  
 December 29 Pascoe, Doug

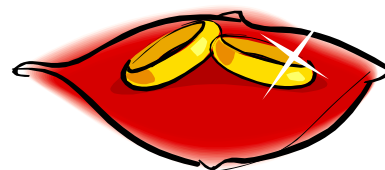
December 29 Hubbard, Glenn  
 December 29 Laws, Billy  
 December 29 Brueggeman, Ada  
 December 30 Voorhees, Ruth  
 December 30 Caldwell, Jack  
 December 30 Caldwell, Devin  
 December 31 Uzzell, Iris  
 December 31 Herndon, Jim  
 December 31 Phelps, Susan  
 December 31 Maxwell, Lillian



## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

December 06 Hamilton, George Sr. & Donna  
 December 14 Vore, Tom & Shana  
 December 16 Ramirez, Anthony & Erika  
 December 19 Oertle, Steve & Jill  
 December 20 Badman, David & Donna  
 December 22 Brown, Gary & Julie  
 December 24 Sullivan, William & Jill  
 December 26 Roberts, Randy & Karen

December 28 Dawson, Steve & Sarah  
 December 29 Bunt, Don Sr. & Evelyn  
 December 29 Mortland, Greg & Lana



## Changes and Additions to the current Church Directory

**Merry Christmas to the St. Paul family!**

If you are going to move soon, give the church office advance notice of your new address. Also, remember to update us on your new phone number and/or email address. Thank you!





# NOVEMBER Stewardship

Budget Offering:	through 11/30/2015	\$25097.00
Designated Giving:	through 11/30/2015	\$3280.74
	Capital Improvements	645.00
	Loose Change	114.80
	Flowers	201.75
	Hickerson Scholarship	95.00
	Memorial	842.00
	Reimbursement	868.69
	2016 Steeple Postage	8.50
	UMCOR	50.00
	Upper Room Donations	20.00
	Helping Hands	435.00
Capital Campaign		1150.00
UM Student Offering		37.00
Transfer From Reserve		1427.75
Thanksgiving Offering		612.00
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$31604.49</b>

**Total Capital Campaign money received as of 11-29-15: \$30,719.50**

# DEADLINE FOR JANUARY 2016 STEEPLE, Fri., DEC. 18th!



## MONTHLY LOOSE CHANGE PROJECT

December's Loose Change Project is Salvation Army in

Alton. The Salvation Army helps individuals and families facing special hardships with food, transportation, rent, and utility assistance, as well as providing meals and shelter for the homeless. May God bless and multiply your gifts!

## DECEMBER Ushers (10:30 a.m.):

**Dec. 6th:** Norma Shaffer, Maggie Funke

**Dec. 8th:** Deb Mayer, **NEED FOLKS!**

**Dec. 15th:** Ian Martin Family

**Dec. 22nd:** Deb Fansler, Randy & Joyce Brueggeman

Call the Church Office (259-5210) if you will be a greeter or usher!

### Average Attendance for NOVEMBER 2015

Early Service	45
Late Service	80
Sunday School	48
Visitors	10
4 Awakening Services	48



**PLEASE HELP US HELP YOU!**

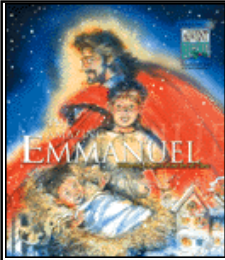
Hospice...  
Hospital...  
Nursing/Care Center..

Whenever you or a member of your family enters the hospital, care/nursing center, or hospice, you need to call the Pastor or the Church Office.

None of the area institutions will notify the church when you enter their facility due to privacy laws. We want to reach out to you at a time when you and your family may need it the most. Your call may be the only way for us to know of the situation. Thank you for your help!

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION - If bad weather requires the cancellation of worship services, we will:**

- ✦ leave a message on the answering machine
- ✦ contact TV Channel 5
- ✦ post a notice on our website (if possible), [www.stpaulwired.org](http://www.stpaulwired.org)
- ✦ contact those on the e-mail & phone prayer chain (if possible)



## JESUS: THE AMAZING EMMANUEL

The scientist knew that society was in trouble. The whole planet would explode in less than a month. But the government leaders did not believe him. They ignored him and demanded he keep silent so not to cause chaos. So he promised the government council that neither he nor his wife would speak out or leave the planet. But they did put their infant son in a spacecraft. They launched him to a solar system six galaxies away just as the planet exploded.

You know who that infant son is, don't you? Of course you do. His name is Kal-el. His father and mother, Jor-el and Lara, launched him to earth just before the planet Krypton exploded. Jor-el realizes he's sending his only son to the primitive planet earth to use his powers for good and justice. Kal-el landed in a field in rural Kansas. He was found by Jonathan and Martha Kent. They adopted this young boy and named him Clark.

On earth, with its heavier gravity, young Clark exhibited super-human strength. Nothing could hurt him, except remnants of meteorites from his native planet. He was faster than a speeding bullet. He was more powerful than a locomotive. He was able to leap tall buildings with a single bound. Do you know who I'm talking about now? It's a bird! It's a plane! No—it's Superman.

While Superman is make believe, there was a real wonder child who came to earth. We celebrate his birth every December. Like Kal-el, he was also sent by a Father to this planet earth. Like Kal-el, he has extraordinary powers. He is able to walk on water. He is more powerful than evil. He is able to rescue people from an eternity of meaningless, hopelessness, and selfishness. But unlike Kal-el, this young Child is not make-believe. His story is history—not fantasy. As we come to the four Sundays of Advent, we will come to adore, admire, and appreciate Jesus, the Amazing Emmanuel!

***The Amazing Emmanuel is more than he appears.*** When little Kal-el landed in a field in Kansas, he was certainly more than he appeared to be. He looked like a mild-mannered child, but he was really the most powerful being on the planet.

When Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, he was certainly more than he appeared to be. He looked like a little baby lying in a manger, but he is really the most powerful being in the universe. Unto us a hero is born! And this is a true story! This is history!

This hero too wonderful for words is not just a good teacher or a great prophet. He is God himself. John says, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (John 1:1). No wonder angels appeared to shepherds. No wonder shepherds bowed in a stable. No wonder wise men came with gifts. Unto us a hero is born. The Amazing Emmanuel has come to earth!

Jesus' existence did not begin one starry night in Bethlehem. He was with God in the beginning, the gospel of John tells us. He is the pre-existent holy one! He is God himself. This is a mystery too wonderful for words. This is God's indescribable gift. We can't fully fathom it. We just need to thank God for a hero too wonderful for words.

***The Amazing Emmanuel has intersected our sphere of existence.*** When Kal-el's spacecraft landed in that field, he intersected our sphere of existence (at least in the comic books, TV shows, and movies).

When Jesus came to that Israeli stable, he entered our sphere of existence. The timeless, eternal, all-powerful Creator took on the form of his creation. John describes it like this, "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*"

God himself pitched his tent in our backyard! Our Lord is not far away. He is not unapproachable. He is not uninterested or uncaring. He has come clothed in human flesh and dwells among us. It's true—we have seen his glory! If you haven't, I pray you will by the time we come to Christmas day when we celebrate the indescribable gift God sent to Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago! Emmanuel. God with us. Thank God for a hero too wonderful for words! He has entered our sphere of existence. He's right here, right now!

***The Amazing Emmanuel is a Gift and the Giver of Gifts.*** When Superman came to earth, our planet received a precious gift (at least in entertainment.) We were honored to have this powerful Kryptonian live here! But people also received gifts through Superman. Time after time, Superman rescued Lois Lane or Jimmy Olson or countless others from danger.

***Continued on Page 9***





It is time to order your poinsettias. The cost is **\$6.75** per poinsettia. The

**order deadline will be Sunday, December 6th.** The poinsettias may be taken home following the services on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th. Please indicate when you order to whom it is “*in memory*” or “*in honor*” of and it is **important** to include your payment when you order. Questions? Call **259-5210**.



**Church outreach  
for Christmas**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU  
GAVE TO HELP THE  
CHILDREN THIS  
CHRISTMAS!**



## 2016 NEWSLETTERS:

The Church Office has received a couple of calls concerning the 2016 Newsletter (The Steeple). The cost to have the newsletter mailed directly to you at home will be **\$8.50**. Of course we will still email the Newsletter, place it on the website, and have copies at the church for you to pick up, to have extras to give to friends you invite to church, and for visitors to take. Watch in the bulletin for a sheet to sign to request your Newsletter to be mailed to you. Or you can go ahead and send your request to the Church Office and your check for **\$8.50**. Any questions...call 259-5210.

## Christmas Offering



The Finance Committee and Church Council have decided that the **undesignated amount** of the Christmas Offering will be used for the general budget. The general budget provides the funds for the ministry and operating expenses of the church. As always, you are encouraged to designate your Christmas Offering for missionaries, ministries, or projects supported by St. Paul. There is a Christmas Offering envelope included in your box of envelopes. You may also use any pew envelope to make the Christmas Offering. Simply mark the envelope as your “Christmas Offering.”

Although your Christmas Offering may be placed in the offering plate on any Sunday or mailed to the Church Office, many people like to lay their offering at the feet of the baby Jesus during the **March to the Manger**. **March to the Manger occurs during both worship services on Dec. 20th.** Some people choose to wrap their offering as a gift for the baby Jesus.

## JESUS: THE AMAZING EMMANUEL *Continued from Page 8*

The Amazing Emmanuel, Jesus, is a gift to this planet. John writes, “*The light shines in the darkness. . .*” Jesus is the light of the world. He is God’s gift to our planet. We live in dark days, but we have the light ready to shine in our lives. He is the Amazing Emmanuel—a hero too wonderful for words.

But Jesus also gives gifts. Notice in another place where John writes how we see Jesus as the Gift and the Giver of Gifts: “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life*” (John 3:16). Jesus is God’s gift to the world. But John continues, “*whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*” He is the Giver of Gifts. He gives eternal life, peace, joy, meaning, hope, to all who come to him and accept his precious gift.

**Jesus truly is the Amazing Emmanuel—unto us a hero is born. Unlike most of our heroes, Jesus is worthy of our worship, our adoration, our desire to be like him. This is the focus of our worship services throughout the Advent Season. Join us on Sundays at 8:15 & 10:30 a.m. and on Christmas Eve at 5 & 7 p.m. as we celebrate Jesus: The Amazing Emmanuel.**



## CAP 'N MITTEN TREE

Our Cap 'N Mitten Tree is in the entryway now! Search out those bargains on gloves, scarfs, and hats to hang on the tree. We also will have a box to collect packages of new underwear and socks. Let's do all we can to help keep folks in need warm this winter. The tree will be up through **Sunday, Dec. 6th.**



### THE WOMEN OF WORSHIP THANK YOU!

A great big THANK YOU from The Women of Worship for everyone who helped in any way to make our **Christmas Boutique** a great success. We appreciate the donations and those who attended and purchased items. Our talented crafters enjoyed making and designing items which were for sale and hope that those of you who purchased gifts or decorations will enjoy them. A complete report on profits from the event will be presented at the Christmas Luncheon Meeting. Money from all of our projects will be distributed at our **Christmas Potluck Luncheon on Tuesday Dec. 8th at NOON** with the business meeting to follow at **1:00 p. m.** All women of the church are invited to participate. Again – Thanks to ALL who helped in any way.

Also, we will have many of our Christmas Craft items for sale during the **Christmas Crafts & Cookie Festival** from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 5 in the Fellowship Hall. Come and check out the variety of things that make great, reasonably priced gifts.

*Celebrate the birth  
of Christ at the  
Christmas Eve Services*

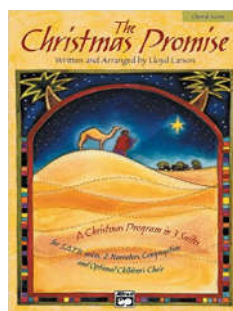
## CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES:

**5:00 p.m. Family Service.**

We tell the Christmas story, sing carols, do pantomimes with the children, and ends with a candlelight service. This service lasts 45 minutes.

**7:00 p.m. Traditional Service.**

Childcare provided. The Christmas Service of most of our childhoods with the Scripture readings, familiar carols, and the Christmas story. The service concludes with a candlelight service. This service lasts one hour.



## The Christmas Cantata!

“The Christmas Promise” is an inspired worship program in 3 parts. Drawing upon familiar seasonal melodies and texts, sometimes arranged in unique combinations, the timeless story of the promised Messiah is presented. This year the Christmas Cantata will be presented at both services on Sunday, Dec. 20th. We pray that you will even now begin to invite family and friends to join you at the 8:15 or 10:30 a.m. service. The March To The Manger will follow the cantata.



**Christ has called us to so much more and died for so much more than our comfort. We need to love Him and love people the way that He commanded us to do. Are we ready for Christmas this year? Is it ever really possible to be "ready"? My prayer is that as the church we will be ready to embrace the seasonal visitors with the open arms of Christ to the extent that they will no longer be seasonal visitors, but fully devoted Christ followers enamored by His love for them.**

**~Jeremy Mika~**



**SLEEPOVER AT THE STABLE:  
A CHRISTMAS MUSICAL**

**CHRISTMAS  
DINNER &  
PLAY**

It is a St. Paul tradition for the church to gather for a Christmas

Dinner. This year's **Christmas Dinner** (prepared by Chef Bob) is **on Sat., Dec. 5th at 6 p.m.** There is no set charge for the dinner. Instead, **we all make a donation for the meal.** *Dinner will be followed by "SLEEPOVER AT THE STABLE," a musical featuring our children and youth!*

So plan to attend it all! It is a wonderful evening filled with the joy of Christmas fellowship around the table as well as enjoying our children and youth sharing the news of the baby Jesus!




**A Christmas Concert will be given by Jason McAtee during the Awakening Service on Sat., Dec. 12 starting**

**at 5 p.m. Jason will be bringing some traditional Christmas songs, along with more recent Christmas songs. You may remember that Jason sang and gave his testimony at one of the previous Awakening services. We are looking forward to having him as our guest again. Bring your family members, friends, and neighbors to this event to enjoy the music of this blessed season!**

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing will be on Friday, December 11th 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Walmart in Wood River (Grocery Entrance)**



We ring with teams of two or more people for one hour at a time... come and make a kettle donation while we are ringing the bells! 



**PECANS:**

This year's pecans are here! The costs are:

- \$10.00** for the 1lb. bag of plain
- \$8.00** for a bag of the chocolate covered pecans.

The pecans being sold are a Fundraiser for the Women of Worship to add to the mission money raised so far this year!



## ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

PRESERVING THE PHYSICAL INTEGRITY OF ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
AS A FOUNDATION OF FAITH AND MISSIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY**Mission Possible**

"THROUGH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE" MATTHEW 19:26

**UNDERSTANDING & GIVING TO MISSION POSSIBLE**

The following information is provided to clarify some misconceptions about our Mission Possible campaign and to further clarify how one might give to the cause. **Mission Possible** is a campaign to provide funding above and beyond our normal operational costs to address some much needed maintenance and renovation work at St. Paul. The primary target of the campaign is the replacement of our aging heating and air conditioning system (HVAC) as well as other much needed items for our church building and senior parsonage. We do this in large part as we consider the future of the ministry of St. Paul UMC and the over 50 diverse ministries that radiate from our church home, and as we consider the role our church building will play in future ministry.

The **October 24th & 25th Mission Possible Commitment Weekend** was the kickoff to our fund raising campaign. So if you were absent or did not give to the campaign during that time, but feel led to participate with your financial gifts, there is still plenty of time to participate. **In order that we can know where we stand with pledges, we ask that you fill out a commitment card (which is available in the church narthex or by calling the church office) if you plan to give to the Mission Possible Campaign.**

Providing your gift(s):

- If you are interested in a one-time gift, send the donation to the church or place it in the Sunday offering, **but please be sure to note Mission Possible (or CFC for Capital Fund Campaign) on the check memo line/offering envelope.**
- You can also give online through our website.
- You can give using your credit card when you provide that information to the church office.
- You can give by cash or check.
- You can also provide financial contributions via securities, real estate, personal properties, or an estate gift by contacting the church office or Bob Blacklock.

If you use the **2015 envelopes** to donate to the *Mission Possible Capital Campaign*, please designate your gift to either **Mission Possible** or **CFC (for Capital Fund Campaign)**. Beginning in **January 2016**, you would place the designated amount for "Mission Possible" gifts on the Capital Campaign line. Donations toward the expenses of our Church Operations (i.e. the General Budget) would go on the **Undesignated** line as always. What is now Capital Improvements, funds meant for unexpected major expenses, will be labeled **Building & Grounds Improvements** on the 2016 envelopes.

**If you have any questions, please call the Church Office for clarification.**

► **IMPORTANT** ◀

**Please, look for the MISSION POSSIBLE in red on the outside of any envelopes from St. Paul UMC for timely information regarding our Capital Fund Campaign!**



### NOW'S THE TIME TO GET ON BOARD THE TRAIN!

There is a children’s story about a little engine that faced the daunting task of cresting a steep hill. Large, fancy engines only laughed at the little train and said “you can’t do this....so why even try.” But the little train said “I think I can” and so the little train started moving forward, fighting back the obstacles and the failures by saying, “I think I can, I think I can, I think I can....” Sure enough to the surprise of the other engines the little train did what others said it couldn’t. The little train crested that steep grade and kept on going!!

This story is a perfect example of the daunting task facing St. Paul in which we said we need to raise funds to maintain this beautiful building and continue our ministry into the future and we need to raise \$575,000.....and some said, “you can’t raise that much money in this church.” But a group of people said “I think we can.” Those same people said, “This is not a mission impossible but rather a Mission Possible!”

With almost \$300,000 pledged, in just three weeks, St. Paul people have spoken and through their gifts have said, “I know we can!” As a result, there is an energy and enthusiasm among our congregation like none we have seen for many years. Uplifted by the response of St. Paul congregants, the Trustees have selected an HVAC (heating/ventilation/cooling) company and are now moving forward to prepare for a new and more efficient system between now and next May.

If you have not yet made your decision about your role in this “train trip” you still have time to get aboard and participate. All gifts, whether small or large, provide the fuel necessary to make this “train trip” truly a Mission Possible. Just pick up a brochure containing a commitment sheet and an envelope, decide what you can give, and either put your envelope into the Sunday morning offering plate or turn it into the church office.

### YOU GOTTA LAUGH!

**“My wife and I have been married for over 46 years. Our lives are totally in sync. For example, the same time I got a hearing aid, she stopped mumbling.”**

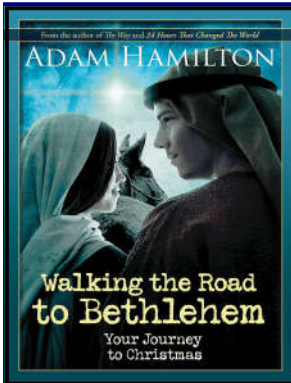
~Rabbi and comedian, Bob Alper



**Pastor Daryl will be on vacation**

**December 28-January 4.**

**If you need pastoral assistance during this time, please call the Church Office or Connie Hickerson, 799-9146.**



Adam Hamilton's study, ***Walking the Road to Bethlehem: Your Journey to Christmas***

is the focus for our Advent Study Group running every Sunday through Sun., Dec. 13 at 5 p.m. Each week,

Hamilton retraces the actual path for Mary & Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Although you will benefit from the entire journey, you will still gain valuable insights to the Christmas story from each segment. You are invited to come as you are able to our gatherings in the Parlor. Here is our final schedule:

**Dec. 6: From Nazareth to Bethlehem**

**Dec. 13: The Manger**



# Jesus is the Reason For the Season!

# Merry Christmas Everyone!



### GIFT OF JESUS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

— PSALM 107: 8-9 NIV

### Offering Envelopes



The 2016 Offering Envelopes will be handled like last years. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you

read this information...

If you are someone who has regularly given on a **weekly** basis you will pick up your 2016 Offering Envelopes in the church entry-way in December, as we have done before.

If you are someone who normally gives on a **monthly** basis you will receive your 2016 Offering Envelopes through the mail to your home. They will be sent bulk mail to you sometime in December. They will arrive at your home so watch for them. You will not receive a box but an envelope with your offering envelopes inside. **PLEASE, do not use them until January 2016.**

If you would like to trade weekly envelopes for monthly or vise versa, call the office as soon as possible.

Thank you!!

