



The Steeple

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

DECEMBER 2024



To the People of St. Paul United Methodist Church,

Happy happy belated Thanksgiving to everyone! I hope and pray that all of you had a wonderful and meaningful celebration with your loved ones and friends. FYI, in Philippine culture, we do not have Thanksgiving. But they know this American custom because many American citizens who are living in the country continue this wonderful tradition. Since Thanksgiving is about thanking God, reunions, and overflowing food and "get-togethers" we have embraced this special Holiday effortlessly. We love God, we love family, and most of all, our common denominator... FOOD. Let us now get back on track

The time of Advent begins on Sunday which is the first of December. What a coincidence. Advent is about the time of preparation before the birth of Jesus; this tradition was born from our early Christian brothers and sisters in the 4th and 5th Centuries. To give you an idea, here is a brief history of Advent and how it changed over time so all of us will know why we do this every year:

The origins of Advent are not well documented, but the first traces of the season appear in the 4th century. Here are some key events in the history of Advent:

- **4th century:** The church in France used the time before Epiphany to prepare for baptism, which was called "St. Martin's Lent."
- **5th century:** The first evidence of Advent worship practices comes from Ravenna, Italy.
- **6th century:** Roman Christians began to associate Advent with the coming of Christ. Pope Gregory I composed many of the prayers, antiphons, and psalm responses.
- **8th century:** Advent was generally observed for six weeks in the East and seven in the West.
- **12th century:** Advent was shortened to four weeks in the West.
- **1946:** Richard Sellmer, a German printer, printed an Advent calendar and introduced it to the United States with the help of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Advent is a season of preparation for Christmas that focuses on Christian life in light of the second coming of Christ. The word "Advent" means "coming" or "arrival."

Technically, we could do away with Advent in my opinion. I love Christmas songs. Regrettably, if we strictly follow the rules, advent will prevent us from singing "Joy to the world the Lord is come" before Dec 25. This issue caused controversies and divided opinions among Christians who are strict in their observance of the Yuletide celebration. But it is what it is. I hope and pray that people will show grace. Instead of being extremely opinionated about this practice, let us focus on why we do it. And that is the arrival of the Messiah. Jesus Christ's birthday needed to be celebrated, and Advent was part of that Celebration. Just think of Advent as our way of preparing for HIS coming. Just like what John the Baptist did. He faithfully prepared the way of the Lord because God chose him to be his messenger. We are God's messengers. And we must be Intentional and Faithful to our call to tell the world that Christ our Savior has/is come. So go ahead, sing Christmas songs or you can wait and observe Advent. Bring out your decorations; say Merry Christmas with conviction and love. You can even wear a Santa costume but just remember, Christmas without Christ is no Christmas at all. It does not make any sense if we say "**Merry Clausmas**," right? I'm sure God would not agree with that concept.

And so, let us begin the countdown. And as we wait, let us be in prayer, let us be hopeful, and let us be loving with one another until... until we arrive on the day Jesus Christ was born.

Matthew 3:3

"This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.""

Blessings to all and until the next issue--

In Christ,

Edward Granadosin

Pastor of East Alton 1st UMC and St. Paul UMC





OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOUS!

- Our deepest sympathy goes out to each family that has recently lost a loved one. This includes the family & friends of **Chris Fink (78)**, husband of Sandy Fink and former members of St. Paul; **Judith “Judy” Miller (82)**, was the chaplain at Alton Memorial and Asbury Village, plus pastored at Bethalto UMC and Dewey Ave. UMC; **Emerson “Bud” Schultz (90)**, band director at North Jr. High (1963-67) and Alton Sr. High (1967-77) and community leader; and **Patsy Meeden (84)**, mother of our former Music Director, Rhonda Griffin. **May everyone who is touched by loss know God’s peace through it all.**

THANK YOU! Our **Community Thanksgiving Lunch** was a great success! Thank you for your support, serving, preparing, and donating. Most of all for your prayers! Blessings were many in working together to serve our community. Thank you! **-EAFUMC**

THANK YOU! To those who set-up and have donated to our **“Cap ‘N Mitten Tree.”** It is covered with cozy items for our local kids and youth who may not have warm clothing.

THANK YOU! To our **Worship Ministry Team** who decorate our sanctuary and makes it look fabulous for the Christmas season. You are an amazing group of workers!

THANK YOU! To the ones who bring treats for **coffee-fellowship time** before our service.

THANK YOU! To the **Sweet Sounds** who bring smiles, sunshine, and music to local nursing home and care center facilities.

THANK YOU! To all our generous givers, who donate food to our **“Continuous Food Drive”** year-round, and for **those who transport** the food to Operation Blessing.

THANK YOU! To our wonderful **musicians, Rayford & Martha Raby**, who share their amazing talent in our worship services. You are such a blessing to us!

THANK YOU AND PRAYERS! For our **communion steward, Linda Scroggins**, who prepares and sets up the bread & juice for our celebration of the Holy Meal and who has had to be on medical leave for a while. Thank you for **her helpers** in the meantime!

THANK YOU! To our **custodian, Charles Slone**, who is keeping things looking well cared for and clean!

THANK YOU! To our **Church Council and Finance Committee**, who with grace and wisdom, guide us through the year with decisions of faith in our finances and projects.

THANK YOU! To the **Board of Trustees** who keeps an eye on the beautiful facility we have been blessed with and makes sure everything is in working order.

THANK YOU! To **anyone and everyone** who helps out and serves at St. Paul UMC in big ways and small ways. It is all important and we should thank you more than we do. May God bless you as you are a blessing to each other and to our community!

THANK YOU! To **everyone** who sent me cards, made phone calls to me, or came to visit (especially Maggie Funke and Pastor Ed) as I have been on the mend! It all is so very helpful and good to have a loving church family. **~Elinor Blacklock**

(OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOUS CONTINUES ON PAGE 3)

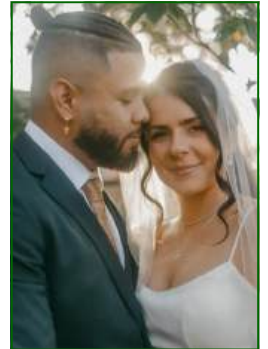




OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOU'S! (CONTINUES)

THANK YOU! To all the teachers and helpers in our **Children's Church!**

- **Congratulations to Pastor Ed & Ruth** on their 25th Wedding Anniversary! It was so great to celebrate with them over at EAFUMC!
- **Congratulations to Caroline "Carly" Campbell & Brian Fuentes** on their November 2nd wedding! Carly's parents are Steve & Sarah Campbell and grandmothers are Elinor Blacklock and Betty Campbell. Blessings on you both as you begin your life journey together. May you always find God's path! (see photo ➔)



Merry Christmas and a very Blessed & Happy New Year!

HARVEY CHILES

"That's What Friends are For"

FUNDRAISING CONCERT

December 8th at 3:00p.m.
at St. Paul UMC

The concert proceeds will be used to support ujimastl.com (a non-profit pay-what-you-can service provider that provides equitable access to food, education, and employment).



SEASONAL ITEMS and CHRISTMAS ITEMS!

There are several decorations and gifts available for purchase in the Fellowship Hall from the Fall Festival!

-Women Of Worship-



Children's Church begins at the start of our 8:45a.m. Worship Service. Into the beginning of the service we have a Children's Moment. A variety of activities are then held in the Children's Church room after the Children's Moment. For December we will be focused on the birth of Jesus Christ! See you on Sundays! This is currently for children ages 5-10 years old.

WE HOPE YOU ARE AS EXCITED AS WE ARE!!



St. Paul Sunday Service in **DECEMBER** 8:45 a.m.

St. Paul UMC is part of a two-point charge with East Alton First UMC. Each congregation has one service on Sundays and Pastor Ed serves as the pastor in both places. The service at St. Paul UMC begins at **8:45 a.m.** The St. Paul UMC service is **LIVE STREAMED** online! You are able to go to our **Facebook Page** and click on a link to watch it as it happens. You will also be able to watch it on **Youtube.com** starting with a search for **St Paul UMC 1167**. You are also welcome to attend the service at East Alton First UMC which begins at **10:15 a.m.** if you cannot get here at the earlier time. Please, keep both congregations in your prayers as we work together to serve the Lord. Thank you!



1st: First Sunday Of Advent. Communion Today.

Scriptures: *Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10;*
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36



8th: Second Sunday Of Advent.

Scriptures: *Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11;*
Luke 3:1-6



15th: Third Sunday Of Advent. MARCH TO THE MANGER!

Scriptures: *Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7;*
Luke 3:7-18



22nd: Fourth Sunday Of Advent.

Scriptures: *Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46b-55; Hebrews 10:5-10;*
Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)



24th: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE! Come to the 5:00p.m. Combined Christmas Eve Service at East Alton 1st UMC.

Scriptures: *Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20*

29th: Scriptures: *1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148;*
Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52



Adult Sunday Classes

⇒ Wesley Sunday School Class
After the Service in the Parlor!

⇒ Adult Bible Study Sunday
School Class After the
Service in the Main Hallway
Classroom!

**WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN
ONE OF THESE TWO CLASSES!!**

hoooray



BIBLE STUDY!
Bible Study will not meet during
the month of December ...
See everyone in January 2025!
~Pastor Ed~



CONTINUOUS FOOD DRIVE: The Outreach Ministry Team will keep a “Food Drive” going. If you can, whenever you shop, get a few extra non-perishables to bring to church for us to give to the food pantries! (**Suggestions:** Mayonnaise, Can Opener, Oil, Powdered Milk, Milk/Oat Milk/Almond Milk/Coconut Milk – kind that is non-refrigerated until opened, Coffee, Peanut Butter, Crackers, Tea Bags, Salt & Pepper, Spaghetti Sauce in a Can or Plastic Jar, Pasta, Canned Vegetables or Meats, Ketchup & Mustard, Spices, Sugar, Cereal, Tuna Fish, Rice, Flour, Dish Detergent, Hand Lotion, Rolls of Paper Towel, Boxes of Facial Tissues, etc.)
You are awesome! Thank you!!

2024 ALTAR FLOWER INFORMATION:

Dec 1: by **Tracy Franks** in honor of **her Grandchildren!**

Dec 8: by **Randy & Joyce Brueggeman** in honor of **their Families!**



Dec 15: by **Betty Burns** in celebration of **my Best Friend & Husband's Birthday!**

Dec 22: by **The Hickerson Family** in memory of **Dr. Norman & Mrs. Carole Taylor.**



Dec 29: by **Steve & Jean Kainz** in memory of **Bill & Jan Pullen and Eric Wood.**



THE FLOWER CHART FOR 2025 HAS BEEN POSTED!! Start filling it in! 😊

DECEMBER OFFICE HOURS

(may be subject to change due to weather or appointments, etc.):

(ALSO, IT IS POSTED ON THE CHURCH OFFICE DOOR)

December 2-3,9-10,16-17,23-24,30-31 = 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.

December 4,11,18,25 = Office Closed for regular Wednesday week day off

December 5-6,12-13,19-20,27= 9 or 10:00a.m. to 2:00p.m.

December 3 WILL BE AT the WOW CHRISTMAS POTLUCK, 11:30a.m.-1p.m.

December 12 & 17 WILL BE GONE FROM 11:00a.m. to 1:00p.m. FOR LUNCH

December 26th OFF for CHRISTMAS!



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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

- 01-Dec Harvey Chiles
- 01-Dec Amy Gowan
- 01-Dec Bobbie Jean Schlemer
- 02-Dec Al Ortegren
- 04-Dec Sandy Harlan
- 05-Dec Meghan Sparling
- 05-Dec Laura Voorhees
- 08-Dec Will Blacklock
- 08-Dec Tammy Davis
- 10-Dec Reid Adams
- 10-Dec Erika Ramirez
- 12-Dec Dorothy Kasinger
- 13-Dec Jon Cameron
- 13-Dec Jamie Gwaltney
- 13-Dec Elise Myers
- 14-Dec Mike Liedtke
- 15-Dec Devin Eyster
- 15-Dec Jessica Giddings
- 16-Dec Elaine Hart
- 16-Dec Rick Helmkamp
- 16-Dec Stephanie Palmer
- 16-Dec Emily Wells
- 18-Dec Joan Ford
- 19-Dec Heather Adams

- 19-Dec Gary Brown
- 19-Dec Kailynne Cruthis
- 19-Dec Megan Parker
- 20-Dec Jenn Champa-Kumar
- 20-Dec Brody Hendricks
- 23-Dec Joe Hoertel
- 24-Dec Ben Brown
- 24-Dec Kaydence Harlan
- 24-Dec Kristina Harlan
- 24-Dec Steve Kainz
- 26-Dec Don Ford Sr.
- 26-Dec Chloe Blacklock
- 26-Dec Wynter Blacklock
- 28-Dec Madilyn Ross
- 29-Dec Ada Brueggeman
- 29-Dec Glenn Hubbard
- 29-Dec Billy Laws
- 29-Dec Doug Pascoe

- 30-Dec Devin Caldwell
- 30-Dec Jack Caldwell
- 31-Dec Jim Herndon
- 31-Dec Lillian Maxwell
- 31-Dec Susan Phelps
- 31-Dec Iris Uzzell



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 06-Dec George & Donna Hamilton Sr.
- 14-Dec Tom & Shana Vore
- 16-Dec Anthony & Erika Ramirez
- 19-Dec Steve & Jill Oertle
- 20-Dec David & Donna Badman
- 22-Dec Gary & Julie Brown
- 24-Dec William & Jill Taylor-Sullivan

- 26-Dec Randy & Karen Roberts
- 28-Dec Steve & Sarah Dawson
- 29-Dec Greg & Lana Mortland



BE SURE TO PICK UP A 2024 CHURCH DIRECTORY!

Merry Christmas to the St. Paul family!



Please, contact the church office if you (OR A FAMILY MEMBER) have had a **change of address, phone number, or email address since the last printing!** We will begin the process of completing a new Church Directory in late January!



NOVEMBER Stewardship

Budget Offering:	11/1/2024 thru 11/30/2024	10464.00
Designated Giving:	11/1/2024 thru 11/30/2024	1403.73
	Capital Improvements	230.00
	Loose Change	70.73
	Flowers	81.00
	Trustees Emerg. Res. Fund	70.00
	Mid-West Mission Dist. Cen.	50.00
	Upper Room	7.00
	Helping Hands	125.00
	Parking Lot Work	100.00
	Women of Worship	20.00
	RCUSD Student Council	35.00
	Staff Christmas Gifts	470.00
	Coats 4 Kids	145.00
	UM Student Offering	10.00
	Thanksgiving Offering	475.00
	Christmas Offering	50.00
	Reimbursements/Dividends	508.75
	Online Giving	351.50
Total:		\$13262.98



An important reminder... there are several ways to send your tithes & offerings if you cannot be here. You can send through the U.S. Mail, through Bill Pay with your bank or Credit Union, through our website's Online Giving (VANCO), and by bringing it to the church during the week. If you plan to bring it by, please, call first to make sure we know you are on the way.

Thank you so much!

HELPING



HANDS

DONATIONS ARE NEEDED!

**DEADLINE FOR
JANUARY 2025
STEEPLE,
Friday, December
20th!**



**MONTHLY LOOSE
CHANGE PROJECT**

December's Loose Change Project is the 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, clothing, and shelter for the homeless. May God bless and multiply your gifts!



EVENING RE-AWAKENING SERVICE
→ Re-Awakening continues a pause.


At this time, Lauren continues to look for folks who would be dedicated to joining a vision team that would help rebuild and plan the future of Re-Awakening. Please, contact Lauren at laurenfrieese20@gmail.com or give her a call at [\(618-660-7967\)](tel:618-660-7967) if you would like to be a part of this. -Lauren Frieese

Christmas Offering



It has been decided that any **undesignated** Christmas Offering will go **50% for Helping Hands and 50% for the Trustees Emergency Reserve Fund**. 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 set of envelopes. You may also use one of the extra envelopes in the pews. **Dec. 15th** will be our **Annual March To The Manger Sunday**. If you cannot attend in-person, don't let that stop you from giving your Christmas Offering! Put it in the mail, bring it on another Sunday, or bring it to the church office during the week!

Want to keep Christ in Christmas?



Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you.

- Steve Maraboli

Ponder how valuable your soul must be for Satan to tirelessly pursue it, and the King to lay down his own life for it.

Jesus is the Reason for the season!

Merry Christmas Everyone!





2024 STEWARDSHIP



→ **REMEMBER
YOUR
GIVING!**

...to keep the ministry of St. Paul UMC growing; a ministry which is needed now more than ever! Thank you!!



ARE HERE!

New Regular 1lb.
bag = \$12
New Chocolate-covered 1lb.
bag = \$12
Last year's Regular 1lb.
bag = \$10



Sometimes you need a
"stop doing" list as badly
as you do a "to do" list.

~varun singhal~

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

If bad weather requires the cancellation of our worship service and Sunday School, we will:

- ✘ **ACTIVATE "OTTO" OUR PHONE TREE CALLING SYSTEM!**
- ✘ contact TV Channel 5 to list it
- ✘ post a notice on our website www.stpaulwired.org (if possible) and on our Facebook page (**St. Paul United Methodist-East Alton IL**)
- ✘ contact those on the e-mail prayer chain (if possible)



In a world where you can be anything ... Be Kind!

➔ The youth will take a break for the busy month of December and then in January will begin meeting on Tuesdays from 5-6p.m. Watch for the starting Tuesday!

If you have a young person in your life who is seeking opportunities for Christian fellowship, activities, sporting events, camps, retreats, etc., please, **fill out the information sheet found on the table near the bulletin sheets on Sunday morning! Put the completed information sheet in the mailbox for the Church Office or in the offering plate.**

Work is also underway to begin a Young Adult/College Age Bible Study on Tuesday evenings 6-7:30p.m. in January. Watch for more info on that!

In Christ's Love & Kindness,
Lauren Friese - Youth Leader (618-660-7967)



* **2024 STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS!** *

We are now collecting toward the 2024 Staff Christmas Gifts **thru Sunday, December 15th. 8:45a.m. service** – give your gifts to **Dave Schiber, Joyce Brueggeman, Deb Mayer, or Jayme Scroggins!** You may also mail or bring your gift to the office during the week! **Mark on check memo as: Staff Christmas Gift**

No Perfect Church, No Perfect Family, No Perfect People, But we have a Perfect God.
Amen.



IMPORTANT: A lot of work will need to be done on our parking lot in the year or so ahead! Part is good enough to be sealed, but a large chunk of it may need to be replaced. If you would like to donate specifically to this work, **designate any amount (small or large) to: PARKING LOT WORK** and it will be held to pay for the work as it happens... Thank you for any extra you want to give!

-The Trustees-



HELP!

Hey everyone! It is me again...Dorothy Kasinger. We have a desperate need for more singers in **Sweet Sounds**. The number is low enough that if anyone is sick or has an appointment and has to miss we just don't have enough to get the job done. We have had to cancel 2 of our outings already in 2024. We don't want to be unreliable to the places we visit. Believe me, **it is a good ministry!** Please, come try it! The residents really enjoy what we offer and you will come away feeling really good!
-Dorothy Kasinger-

Find **joy** in every day, not because life is always good but because **God** is.



Sometimes you have to look back at God's faithfulness in order to move forward.

Remember how God brought you through before, and trust that He will do it again.



Christmas Party Potluck 2024

Tuesday, December 3rd 11:30a.m.
Potluck – bring your favorite dish of food! **Also, socks & underwear for the Cap 'N Mitten Tree!**
We will disburse our 2024 funds.
ALL St. Paul women are welcome!



Annual Christmas Dinner

We are so excited to be able to let you know that we will have our **Annual Christmas Dinner 2024** here at St. Paul UMC and the dinner will again be a **potluck!!** The church will provide the meat (fried chicken and ham), plates (etc.), and drinks and you will bring all the other wonderful food! We are doing it earlier in the day as was requested!

On Saturday, December 14th at 1:00 p.m.

will be the 2024 Christmas Dinner in the St. Paul UMC Fellowship Hall.
→The deadline for reservations is Sunday, December 8th.

Please, sign up below to let us know how many are coming and what you will be bringing! We want to make sure that there is plenty of a variety of food for everyone!

Please, complete the form below and put the whole page in the offering plate, bring it by or mail it to the St. Paul church office, contact the St. Paul church office at **618-259-5210**, or send an email with the information in it to **info@stpaulwired.org**.
Be sure to join us for this special family time: fun, food, fellowship!



Christmas Dinner Reservation Form



Name _____ Phone# _____

Number attending: Adults _____ Children _____

I will bring (check all that apply):

___ Vegetable Dish _____

___ Salad (lettuce, potato, etc.) _____

___ Pasta Dish _____

___ Casserole _____

___ Side Dish _____

___ Dessert _____

___ Other _____

___ I can help with any clean-up when the event is over!