



The Steeple

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

DECEMBER 2025



To the People of St. Paul United Methodist Church,

Matthew 1:23 *"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."*

Well, what do you know; it's that time of the year. It seemed that we celebrated Christmas last year and that 2025 flew by so fast; the season of hope and giving is here once more. But before anything else, belated Happy Thanksgiving to everyone. I hope you had a wonderful time with your families. And of course, the joyous fellowship and sumptuous meal were worth everything. Believe it or not, it is just the beginning.

I do not recall if I ever told you that Christmas is my favorite season of all. In the Philippine culture, we put up our decorations as early as September, with Christmas trees, Christmas stars, twinkling lights, ornaments, and playing Christmas carols already. Malls, parks, business establishments, resorts, and yes, even street vendors would have their own special way of remembering Christ's birth. We are not much on Santa Claus and reindeer because the Philippines has a tropical climate. So if ever we have a "Santa," he would be wearing shorts and sunglasses and be in an air conditioned vehicle. We are more like the characters of the Christmas story in the Bible. The highlight of the celebration is in our churches, and our church prepares a grandiose musical Christmas Cantata presented either on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Sunday. We have a big choir, so it is an unbelievable sight of the depiction of Christ coming through music and word.

Indeed, the Christmas spirit is very strong not only in the whole country but in the heart of every person. As much as we can, we continue that culture in my family, even if we are 5000 miles away. We do our best to tell the world that Christ, the newborn King, is the center of Christmas. He is the reason for the season. He is Emmanuel, God with us. Born of a virgin. Wrapped in swaddling clothes. And will reign through all generations to come.

And so, I pray that your celebration will be about Jesus Christ. I hope that your families will welcome the Son of God in your gift giving, your meal fellowship, and your family devotions. And I also pray that you will pass on the torch of peace and hope to your children, full of love and understanding. In **Matthew 1:18-23** it says this:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. **19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. **20** But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." **22** So all of this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: **23** "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

This is the Christmas story. Merry Christmas to all and
God Bless You!

**Blessings to all and until the next issue, just believe--
In Christ Alone, Edward Granadosin
Pastor of East Alton 1st UMC and St. Paul UMC**





OUR CHURCH FAMILY & THANK YOU'S!

- **Our deepest sympathy** goes out to each family that has recently lost a loved one. This includes the family & friends of **Herbert "Herbie" Short, Jr. (78)**, friend of Lois Mitchell and Ruth Bell; **Jeanette Hoertel (88)**, mother and mother-in-law of Joe (Pastor Debra) Hoertel; **Rev. Rhoda Warner (31)**, recent pastor of Alton Main Street UMC; and **Rodney "Rod" Croxford (84)**, husband of Virginia Croxford and long time member of St. Paul UMC. (see obit page 3). **May everyone who is touched by loss know God's peace through it all.**

THANK YOU! I'm so deeply grateful for my church family. I appreciated all of your cards, calls, visits, rides, special notes, and prayers. Thank you so very much. Your kindness has been a true gift to me. "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers." Ephesians 1:16 *-Jamie Gwaltney*

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 make it look fabulous for the Christmas season. You are an amazing group of workers!

THANK YOU! To the ones who bring snacks for **coffee-fellowship time** before our service and to the ones who make the coffee.

THANK YOU! To the **Sweet Sounds** who always brought smiles, sunshine, and music to local nursing home and care center facilities. You had to stop this fall and you are missed!

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! To our **communion stewards** who prepare and set up the bread & juice for our celebration of the Holy Meal. Thank you to **all helpers** in this ministry!

THANK YOU! To our **custodian, Charles Slone**, who is keeping things looking well cared for and clean! You are a blessing to us!

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 the teachers and helpers in our **Children's Church** and **Sunday School**. To the liturgists, **Dennis & Becky Tuchalski**, who help lead worship. To our sound and tech workers, **Randy McLain** and **Mark Mayer**, who help make our worship services available in-person and online.

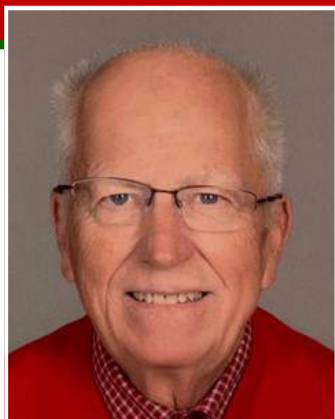
THANK YOU! To **anyone** and **everyone** who helps out and serves at St. Paul UMC in big ways and small ways. It is all important and we should thank you more than we do. May God bless you as you are a blessing to each other and to our community!

Merry Christmas and a very Blessed & Happy New Year!





We Say Goodbye To Our Dear Friend...



Rodney "Rod" Croxford, 84, passed away at 2:31p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2025, at Jersey Community Hospital. He was born on September 4, 1941, in Alton, IL, the son of the late Harvey & Irma (Willis) Croxford. He married the former Virginia Mae "Ginny" Kessler on August 10, 1963, in Granite City and she survives. Other survivors include two daughters and sons in-law: Leigh Ann & Glenn Abbott of Indianapolis, IN, Cindy & Rick Haynes of Indianapolis, IN, one son and daughter-in-law: Brian & Gina Croxford of Indianapolis, IN, seven grandchildren: Allen, Elise, Emma, Zoe, Myles, Samuel, and Elizabeth all of Indianapolis, IN, a sister and brother in law: Shirley & Melvin Wieneke of Golden Eagle, IL, one brother: Edward Croxford of Godfrey, several nieces, nephews, great nieces, and great nephews.

He was employed as an IRS agent for 14 years prior to opening his own accounting business Croxford & Company in Alton. He was a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church in East Alton since October 3, 1965 where he held many positions and served on many committees. He was a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the Illinois Certified Public Accountants Society. He was a member of the East Alton Rotary Club since 1982. At Bradley University in Peoria, IL, he was a member of the Air Force ROTC. Because of his link to the ROTC, he became a proud member of the Patriot Guard Riders.

He and his wife travelled to all 50 states, all 7 continents, and travelled to most of the National Parks. He enjoyed golfing, traveling, and the St. Louis Cardinals.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother: Kenneth, a sister-in-law: Mary Croxford, and two nephews: Todd Croxford and Dennis Croxford.

Rod was a true blessing to the ministry and the people of St Paul UMC...we miss him so very much. Please, remember to hold his family in your prayers.



WOW Christmas Party Potluck 2025

NOW ON: Tuesday, December 9th 11:30a.m.

Potluck – bring your favorite dish of food!

And socks & underwear for the Cap 'N Mitten Tree!

We will disburse our 2025 funds.

ALL St. Paul women are welcome!



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 **LIVESTREAMED** 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!



7th: Second Sunday Of Advent. Communion Today.

Scriptures: *Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19; Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12*



14th: Third Sunday Of Advent.

Scriptures: *Isaiah 35:1-10; Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11*



21st: Fourth Sunday Of Advent. MARCH TO THE MANGER!

Scriptures: *Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25*



24th: CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE! Come to the 5:00p.m.

Combined Christmas Eve Service here at St. Paul UMC. Scriptures: *Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14*



25th: MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE!

Scriptures: *Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-4; John 1:1-14*

28th: Scriptures: *Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23*



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...See you on Sundays!
This is currently for children 5-10 years old.

WE HOPE YOU ARE AS EXCITED AS WE ARE!!



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!!

2025 ALTAR FLOWER INFORMATION:

Dec 7: by **Tappy Family** in memory of **Lori Tappy**.

Dec 14: by **Herndon Family** in honor of **St. Paul United Methodist Church!**

Dec 21: by **Tracy Franks** in honor of **the Taulbee family**.

➔ **You may take your Poinsettias home beginning after church this day!**

Dec 28: by **Susan Chapman** in memory of **Ruth Voorhees' Birthday**.



**THE 2026 FLOWER CHART HAS BEEN POSTED
SO START THINKING ABOUT WHAT DATES YOU
MIGHT WANT TO FILL IN!**

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 Hall Classroom!

**WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU
JOIN A CLASS!!**



BIBLE STUDY!
NO Bible Study
all of December!

~Pastor Ed~



PECANS

Regular 1lb. bag = **\$12**
Chocolate-covered 1lb. bag = **\$13**



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 Schlemmer
 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



WE NEED UPDATES FOR THE CHURCH DIRECTORY!

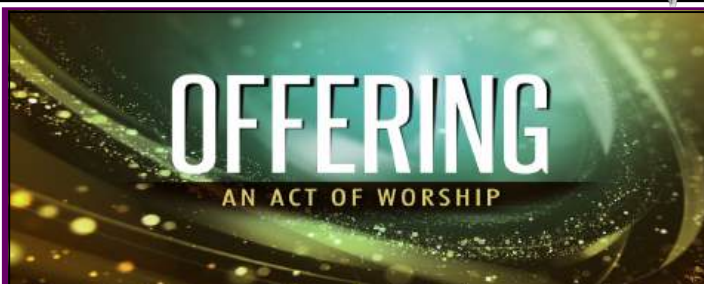
**Merry
Christmas
to the
St. Paul
family!**



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!** Thank you!

**NOVEMBER Stewardship**

Budget Offering:	11/1/2025 thru 11/30/2025	\$10,541.00
Designated Giving:	11/1/2025 thru 11/30/2025	2,075.09
	Capital Improvements	75.00
	Loose Change	53.09
	Flowers	101.00
	Staff Christmas Gifts	285.00
	Helping Hands	175.00
	Memorials	20.00
	Parking Lot Work	470.00
	Thanksgiving Offering	430.00
	Upper Room Donations	1.00
	Postage	120.00
	Coats 4 Kids	145.00
	Mid-West Dist.	50.00
	Operation Blessing	150.00
	Online Giving	351.50
Total:		\$12,967.59



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!

**DEADLINE FOR
JANUARY 2026
STEEPLE,
Monday, December
22nd!**

**"THIS IS MY
COMMAND—BE STRONG
AND COURAGEOUS!
DO NOT BE AFRAID OR
DISCOURAGED. FOR THE
LORD YOUR GOD IS WITH
YOU WHEREVER YOU GO."**

JOSHUA 1:9 NLT

**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!



Music for Mission *2025*

ON DECEMBER 14TH
AT 6 PM ONWARDS

ST PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,
10 N CENTER ST., EAST ALTON



Featuring

Pastor Edward Grandosin of East Alton and St Paul UMC

Organist Rayford Raby | Pianist, Christian Gonzales

Alumni of Western Illinois University:

Trumpeteer Lemuel William Johnson

This is a free-will donation concert for the benefit of The Volunteers
in Mission Trip to Bohol, Philippines April 6-20, 2026



* **2025 STAFF CHRISTMAS GIFTS!** *

We are now collecting for the 2025 Staff Christmas Gifts thru Sunday, December 14th. On Sundays give your gifts to Becky Tuchalski, Joyce Brueggeman, Deb Mayer, or Jayme Scroggins! You may also mail or bring your gift to the office during the week!
If using a check, mark on the memo line as: Staff Christmas Gift



THE ST. PAUL SINGERS!

We have been invited to sing **Christmas Carols** at the **East Alton Museum** on **Saturday, Dec. 6** as part of the Annual East Alton Christmas event. We would love to have several folks join in the singing for this...we will meet at St. Paul UMC at 3p.m. on Dec. 6 and warm-up until 3:30p.m. We will then get on the van and head to the museum and to our parking spot! We will sing from 4-6p.m. and then we will maybe pick a place nearby to enjoy a meal together before going back to the church!
 For more information please, call the church office at **618-259-5210** or call Maggie Funke, **618-259-9490!**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

If bad weather requires cancellation of our worship service & 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)

PLEASE NOTE: If there is snow on a morning when the Church Office is to be open, the Church Secretary will get to the office as soon as safely possible. If there are 3 or more inches on the road, she must wait for her street to be plowed before being able to get out of her subdivision. That gives her time to shovel her driveway with her sister. Please, be patient and pray for her safety on those days. If there are 6 inches or more of snow, she might not make it in at all and will work more the next possible day or in the afternoon of her day off.
 Thank you for understanding!

DECEMBER OFFICE HOURS (may be subject to change):

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

December 1-2,8-9,15-16,22-23,29-30 = 9:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.

December 3,10,17,(24 & 31 at 1p.m.)= Office Closed for regular Wednesday week day off

December 4-5,11-12,18-19= 10:00a.m. to 2 or 3:00p.m.

ON December 9 GONE FROM 11:30a.m. to 1:00p.m. FOR WOW PARTY HERE.

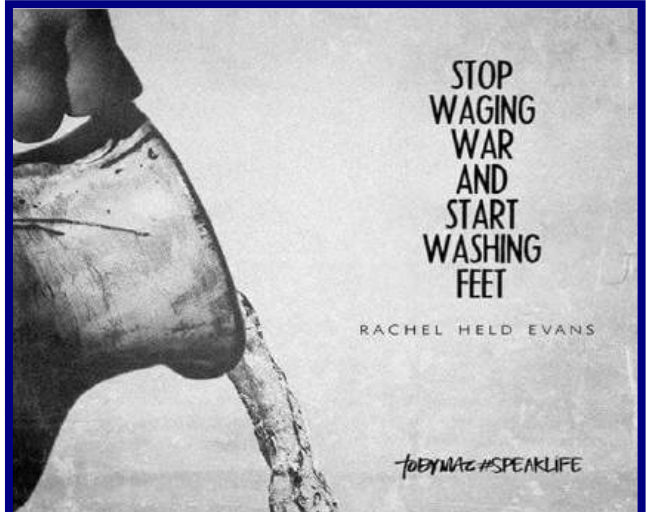
ON December 11 GONE FROM 11:15a.m. to 1:00p.m. FOR LUNCH MEETING AWAY.

➔ **ON December 24 at 1p.m. Office Closed through December 26 for Christmas & Vacation Day!**

➔ **ON December 31 at 1p.m. Office Closed through January 1 for New Year!**



IMPORTANT: A lot of work will need to be done on our parking lot in the year or so ahead! A large chunk of it needs to be replaced. If you would like to donate 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-



**Jesus is the Reason
for the season!
Merry Christmas
Everyone!**





Cap 'N Mitten Tree 2025



NOV. 2nd - DEC. 14th!

Christmas Offering



It has been decided that any **undesigned** Christmas Offering will go **50% for Helping Hands and 50% for the General 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. 21st** 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!

SEASONAL ITEMS and CHRISTMAS ITEMS!

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



-Women Of Worship-

I am not asking whether you know things about Him but do you know God, are you enjoying God, is God the centre of your life, the soul of your being, the source of your greatest joy? He is meant to be.

— Martyn Lloyd-Jones —

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