UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Messenger

The newsletter of St. Paul United Church of Christ
903 Meier Road, Old Monroe, Missouri 63369

December 2026

Find us on: facebook

www.stpauluccom.com

Greetings!

So far, the weather here has stayed fairly "fall-ish." Still, with the coming of Thanksgiving, I am already thinking about this "most wonderful time of the year." I haven't yet dug out the Christmas albums, but I know I will be doing that soon.

Even as a pastor, it is sometimes hard for me to stay in Advent rather than just jump right to Christmas. But Advent, that time of expectation and preparation for the birth of the Savior is something too important to miss, too important to just let elide into Christmas. So I hope you will join me in taking full advantage of this season where we prepare our hearts for the coming of Emmanuel.

The preaching themes for each of the four Sundays in Advent will be the same theme as the Advent candles in the Advent wreath: On the first Sunday in Advent, we celebrate Hope; on the second, Peace; on the third, Joy, on the fourth, Love, and finally we celebrate the gift of Christ on Christmas Eve.

This year we'll be having two Christmas Eve services, one at 6:00 PM and one at 11 PM. The services will be the same at both times. I know that many of you share the same excitement I have about welcoming Christmas Day as the clock turns from 11:59 PM to 12 Midnight, and I also know that many of you (like me, most days of the year) may be "early to bed" types, so we are so pleased to be able to have services at times that are good for both these subsets of our congregation.

Another opportunity this year is our "Blue Christmas" or Longest Night service. Held on the longest night of the year, just before Christmas, this service is for anyone who has suffered a loss, or is facing a loss. So many times, the grieving, the lonely, the hopeless, dread the approach of the holiday season, and find it hard to participate in the revelry around them. This service is a way for the church to say that we know that there are those who feel sad during the holidays, and the church is here for them every bit as much as it is for anyone else. It is a simple, meditative service of readings and litanies. It will be held at 6 PM Monday, December 21st.

As we begin our second Advent together, I hope you rejoice in the newness of the season and the still-newness of our journey together.

May God bless you richly this holiday season.

Pastor Jim

Our Church Family

Worship News…

Blue Christmas Service, Monday, December 21st at 6:00pm.

Christmas Eve Services, 6:00pm and 11:00pm.

Food Pantry News

During the month of October, 79 people visited the Food Pantry with a total of 251 people being helped.

If you will be making a monetary donation for tax year 2026, please have it to the church office no later than December 26. Thank you.

Committee Heads – I will need your reports by January 6th, 2027.



We continue to keep in our prayers:

Lynn and Ron D., Ernie M., Eileen T., Lyle R., Jamie, Nor, Rick C., Carolyn M., Jackie, Belinda D., Mary and Jerry, David, Rick L., Billy, Tara, Pam, Nick G., Jane, Marilyn and Bill, Miriam, Jerry A.

We lift up in our prayers those who need prayers for their *long-term circumstances*: Carol Jean P and Jane M.

Consider Council

St. Paul will need two new church council members in 2027 to replace retiring members. The Council makes decisions and addresses the concerns of members. It meets once a month for about an hour.

Rules say that the Council should not have members from the same household. Members can be related. Please think about serving.

Consider Committees

Are you interested in serving on a committee or maybe you have served for many years in one area and are interested in trying something new?

Chairpersons of committees, does your group need more members? Please start thinking about which committees you would like to stay with and/or change to.

WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH

2026 Monthly Attendance Average

January: 21

February: 24

March: 28

April: 27

May: 28

June: 20

July: 25

August: 27

September: 32

October: 22

November:

December:

November Attendance:

November 1: 26

November 8: 30

November 15: 24

November 22: 26

November 29:

Please remember to invite our inactive members, as well as your family and friends, to worship. Evangelism and hospitality go hand in hand!

Our giving in 2026…

Based on our budget for 2026 our offering each week needs to average $2190.29

	General Fund	Stewardship
Nov 1	$ 2208.00	$ 245.00
Nov 8	$ 3665.00	$ 20.00
Nov 15	$ 355.00	$ 70.00
Nov 22	$ 150.00	$ 20.00

Our giving in 2026…

January Average:	$ 1478.33
February Average:	$ 1226.25
March Average:	$ 1160.00
April Average:	$ 1070.00
May Average:	$ 1978.00
June Average:	$ 1133.75
July Average:	$ 1075.00
August Average:	$ 990.60
September Average:	$ 1200.50
October Average:	$ 1077.50
November Average:	$
December Average	$



Ushers/Greeters

December 6	Sharon Brinkman & Joyce Noble
December 13	Phyllis & Darryl Freese
December 20	Rick Kincer & Rich Warren
December 21	
December 24	(6:00pm) Joyce Noble
December 24	(11:00pm)
December 27	Linda Meier & Karol Keeteman

Acolytes

December 6	Cameron Rolf
December 13	Connor Rolf
December 20	Joyce Noble
December 21	
December 24	(6:00pm) Joyce Noble
December 24	(11:00pm)
December 27	Joyce Noble



Mary Aubuchon	10
Joseph Walker	10
Gerald Hackman	11
Joyce Noble	21
Ann Rolf	24
Tara Kelly	27
Janet Drown	29



Mike & Eileen Tiesing December 12

Fellowship Hour Servers

December 6	Food Pantry
December 13	Christian Nurture
December 20	PPR
December 27	Stewardship

Food Pantry Schedule

Dec 2	11am to 1pm 4 to 6pm	Norma & Phyllis Janet & Liza
Dec 9	11am to 1pm 4 to 6 pm	Norma & Karol Joyce & Rich
Dec 16	11am to 1pm 4 to 6pm	Steve & Georgia
Dec 23	11am to 1pm 4 to 6pm	Karol & Norma Janet & Liza
Dec 30	11am to 1pm 4 to 6pm	Georgia & Liza Janet & Steve

ST. PAUL UCC COUNCIL MINUTES

October 19 ,2026

PRESENT: Jerry Gifford, Jennifer Schulte, Glenda Keeteman, Christopher Dickmeyer, Rev. Jim Oleson, Casey Black (non-member), Treasurer

ABSENT: Karol Keeteman

Opening Prayer – Jerry

Quorum Count (Four (4) = ½ plus one total Council members) – Jennifer, Quorum present

Review of Agenda – Chris made motion to accept with changes; seconded by Glenda. No discussion, motion passed.

- **Treasurers Report** – Glenda made motion to accept as written, seconded by Jennifer. No discussion, motion passed.
- **Secretary's Report** – Glenda made motion to accept as written, seconded by Chris. No discussion, motion passed.
- **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Jim presented his report. No mileage at this time that needs to be approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

1. **Worship – Christopher** – November 15th, service will be led by Doug Gifford, while Pastor is on vacation. Poinsettia order has been placed. Reformation Sunday is 11/1, All Saint's Day. Totenfest is Sunday, 11/22. Blue Christas service is Monday, 12/21. Christmas Eve service will be held 12/24, at 6pm and 11pm.
2. **Grounds Committee – Jennifer –** meeting on Wednesday, 10/21, to do the annual walk through.
3. **Christian Nurture – Jennifer** –Halloween Truck or Treat is set for October 24, from 5-8.
4. **Stewardship – Glenda** – nothing to report
5. **Finance – Casey** – they are reviewing Undesignated Funds
6. **Boy Scouts – Jerry** – Eagle Scout project, the bench around the fire pit, has been completed.
7. **Food Pantry – Karol** – Caring & Sharing is now back on schedule.
8. **Bright Futures – Glenda** – Christmas in the Community is set for 12/6. They are accepting donations (household goods, clothing (all sizes), toys, etc)

OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- Signs – sign is ready, but a frame needs to be built. Dig Right needs to be called first before we can install it.
- Painting hallway in Christian Ed Building – still in progress
- Lights – still in progress
- Painting Schoolhouse –still in progress
- Gift Acceptance Policies/Undesignated Fund – still in progress

NEW BUSINESS:

- 2027 Proposed Budget – Chris made motion to accept the proposed budget as written, seconded by Glenda. No discussion, motion passed.
- Schedule Congregational Budget Meeting – meeting is set for November 8, after service.
- Nominating Committee – Glenda is going to ask Norma

Next Meeting

- **Date & Time** – November 9th @ 5:15pm
- **Opening Prayer** – Glenda

ENTERTAIN MOTION TO CLOSE – Motion made by Chris, seconded by Jennifer. No discussion, motion passed.

CLOSING PRAYER – Lord's Prayer

Respectively submit
Jennifer Schulte, Council Secretary

December Stewardship

Bridge of Hope

Bridge of Hope in Troy has been designated for the monthly special offering. Founded in 2024, Bridge of Hope became a reality with land supplied by Lincoln County and with construction funds received from a national opioid class-action lawsuit settlement. Since opening, Bridge of Hope operations have been funded through partnerships with several businesses and agencies such as Mercy Hospital, Toyota and Catholic charities as well as local churches and organizations.

Bridge of Hope has two areas of services, residential housing and a resource center space. Residents who have benefited from the short-term temporary housing are referred through the tri-county Coordinated 211 program and then screened through additional background checks. Those being housed benefit from the wrap-around services offered which can include securing stable employment, budgeting and securing affordable housing. The resource center provides a variety of services for community members including shower and laundry facilities, a meal, internet access and connection to local agencies and resources.

Stewardship invites you to partner with Bridge of Hope through the December special offering and help those needing immediate, short-term assistance and those who are working to achieve long-term financial independence for we are all children of God.

The Stewardship Committee

December 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Food Pantry 11:00am – 1:00pm & 4-6pm	3	4	5
6	7 Scouts 7:00 pm	8 Cub Scouts 7pm	9 Food Pantry 11:00am – 1:00pm & 4-6pm	10	11	12
13	14 Council Meeting 5:15pm Scouts 7:00 pm	15 Cub Scouts 7pm	16 Food Pantry 11:00am – 1:00pm & 4-6pm	17	18	19
20	21 Blue Christmas Service 6:00pm Scouts 7:00pm	22 Cub Scouts 7pm	23 Food Pantry 11:00am – 1:00pm & 4-6pm	24 Christmas Eve Services 6 & 11pm *Christmas Eve*	25 *Christmas*	26
27	28 Scouts 7:00pm	29 Cub Scouts 7pm	30	31 *New Year's Eve*		

St. Paul United Church of Christ

903 Meier Road, Old Monroe, MO 63369

Pastor……..Rev. James Oleson

Church Phone……..……..636-665-5329

Email……..…….stpauluccom@gmail.com

Website…….....stpauluccom.com

Find us on Facebook

Administrative Assistant/Editor……....Casey Black

Sunday

Book/Bible Study (Sept. thru May) ….....9:15am

Worship……10:30am

Coffee and Fellowship……..……11:30am

Church Council Members

President……...Jerry Gifford..…… 636-668-8869

Vice President…. Glenda Keeteman……636-661-5507

Secretary……..Jennifer Schulte……636-566-8985

Member……Chris Dickmeyer.....636-383-2079

Member……Karol Keeteman.....636-667-5144

Treasurer……Casey Black……..636-665-5329
(Non-member)

