

All-Church Christmas Caroling

On **Saturday, December 17**, from 1-4 pm, St. Paul's members of all ages are invited to share holiday songs with and to extend their care to those who are homebound or in care centers. Meet at 1 pm in the choir room.

Children's Christmas Program, "Listen to the Angels"

December 18, 10:30 am in the Sanctuary

In this year's program, Gabriel and some older angels explain to the younger angels what the first Christmas was like. Sunday School will not be meeting that morning so that everyone can be there to support the children as they share their faith through word and song. *The Children's Newsletter* has details on meeting times and places for children.



Christmas Eve Mission Offering

On this holy night, the Sending to Serve Committee, the pastors and lay leadership of St. Paul's invite and challenge us to participate in the special mission offering for Advent and Christmas for Apportionments – **our basic mission giving of the church**. The committee has refocused our Christmas Eve mission offering because Apportionment missions are central to all other mission giving and **provide the foundation for missions of other natures to happen**. We want to honor our commitment to the connectional missions with this generous offering.



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December 24 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

★ Childcare is provided

- ★ 4:00 pm Christmas Eve Youth/Children's Recital
- ★ 4:30 pm Family Worship
- ★ 7:00 pm Contemporary
- ★ 8:30 pm Christmas Prelude
- ★ 9:00 pm Traditional with Choir
- 10:30 pm Christmas Prelude
- 11:00 pm Traditional with Communion



December 25 - Christmas Day

★ 10:30 am Service of Scripture & Carols
No Children or Youth Sunday School
Adult Sunday School for those wishing to meet
(Please notify office before December 21 if an Adult Sunday School is meeting)

1-3 pm Christmas Dinner Served
call 211 for reservations!



December 31 - New Years' Eve - No Worship

January 1 - New Year's Covenant Services

- ★ 8:15 am Chapel with Communion
- ★ 9:00 am Traditional with Communion
- ★ 10:30 am Worship Café with Communion

January 1 Sunday School—10:20am

The Sunday School schedule for New Year's day will be slightly different than usual:

- **Preschool** will be combined in room 201 (the 3 year old room).
- **Kindergarten through 4th grade** will meet together in room 110 (the youth room). There will be no separate opening time.
- **Club 56, Confirmation, and Senior High** will not be meeting.
- **Adult classes** who wish to meet should inform the office so their classroom will be unlocked.

January 8 - Regular Worship Schedule Resumes

END OF YEAR DONATIONS

In order for donations to qualify as a charitable contribution deduction for 2011, the donation **must** be received or post-marked no later than December 31, 2011. Checks received in 2012, even if predated to 2011, will be recorded as a 2012 donation, unless delivered by mail bearing a 2011 postmark. This is in compliance with Internal Revenue statutes. If you have any questions, please call Kate Ulmer at the church office, 363-2058.

Worship at St. Paul's

****Sunday's worship may be viewed on:
Mediacom Cable Channel 18 at 6:00pm Wednesdays
ImOn Channel 4 at 10:00am Thursdays**

December 18

**Fourth Weekend of Advent
Children's Christmas Program 10:30
John 1:16**

We Have All Received Grace upon Grace

December 24 & 25

**Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
Schedule on Page 1**

John 1:14a

**"The Word became flesh and made his home
among us"**

Come, invite someone to join you and worship God!

Please Note:

**We cannot accept Thrift Mart
donations until early February.**

Weekly Highlights

Sunday, December 18 All worship has childcare

7:45am Blood Pressure Checks - Library
8:15am Communion Worship - Chapel
9:00am Traditional Worship - Sanctuary
10:20am No Sunday School—Children's Program
10:30am Children's Christmas Program—Sanctuary
11:30am Worship Café - Wesley Center
5:00pm Hispanic Worship - Wesley Center

Monday, December 19

12:00pm Sanctuary Open for Prayer - Sanctuary (M, W)
6:00pm Reaching and Receiving - 119
6:30pm Finance Committee - 317
7:00pm Martha Circle - Parlor
7:00pm SYRUP (Young Adult) - 110

Tuesday, December 20

7:00am Companions in Christ - Library
9:00am Staff Meetings

Wednesday, December 21

7:00am Men's Bible Study - Annex
9:30am Stitching for Missions - Annel
6:00 pm Bereans Bible Study - 317
7:30 pm Sanctuary Choir - Sanctuary

Thursday, December 22

6:15pm Toastmasters - 117
7:30pm Hispanic Bible Study - 119

Friday, December 23

9:00am Bulletin Stuffers - Parlor
12:00pm Office Closed

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve Worship and music—
Please see page 1 for full schedule

Sunday, December 25—Worship has Childcare

10:30am Worship—Sanctuary
10:20am Select Adult Sunday Schools

Building Closed December 26

Please see website calendar (www.stpaulsumc.org)
for more information



Rev. Harlan Gillespie
Senior Pastor

From Harlan

"We have all received grace upon grace."

John 1:16

The Gospel writer John is often said by scholars to be engaged in a dialogue with the synagogue down the street. John's point of view is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. The synagogue's view is that Jesus is not the Messiah. At various key moments in history, this dialogue was interpreted to be a heated argument and became fodder for persecuting Jews.

I believe that John had something else in mind. John, while professing that "his own", meaning the Jews, did not receive, professes even more strongly that "we have all received grace upon grace." In John's mind there is no question about who has received the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Everyone has received grace upon grace – more grace, the gift of God's unconditional love, than any of us and all of us, the entirety of humanity, can ever fathom.

This is not some esoteric, theological principle. It is real life and real grace. Humanity suffers real diseases and disorders, we experience the tragedy and the joy of what it means to be human. We make mistakes, we vow to do better, we sometimes fall short, sometimes succeed. Even with our best efforts divisions remain that lead to violence. We are a strange and mysterious mixture of sorrow and joy, hope and despair. The sum total of our lives is still active in us even years after a life-changing event, while at the same time, we are caught up in the everyday necessities of our routines. John knows about this real life. I am of the opinion that he knows the mysterious mix that we live.

He also knows that God's grace has been freely given to everyone of us in multiple ways: "Grace upon grace," as he wrote it. Real life. Real grace. Another Christian writer, Paul, put it this way: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

I know of your life and my life, our lives together, enough to realize that we share the strange and mysterious mixture of sorrow and joy every day. Christmas is God's presence with us in real life with real grace. God, who in Jesus Christ, who has crawled in next to us in this life with the grace to love us all the more deeply.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

Prayer Shawl Team



The Prayer Shawl Team knitted over 140 Prayer Squares of Blessings for those who attended this year's Blue Christmas Service. If you or someone you know would be blessed with a square, please speak with Pastor Sherrie or Char Burton. Thank you Prayer Shawl Team!



*Prayer - The Ministry of Caring
of the St. Paul's Family*

December 14, 2011

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace...

John 1: 16

Triune God, hear our prayers for...

- Those hospitalized at St. Luke's and at Mayo in Rochester.
- Mayo, Rochester: Bill Barret (Jill) friend of Phil Rogers
- Continued healing and grace for those in need.
- Memorial prayers for the family and friends of those who have recently died.
- The Church of Jesus Christ, and the church of the week, DeWitt, UMC, and Pastor Chuck Kelsey.
- Those under Hospice Care.
- Praises to God this Advent and every day for our church, good health, shelter, family, the opportunity to worship and prayers for peace, the needy and for those without freedom to worship.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

**How to Achieve Racial Reconciliation
—KCRG this Sunday**

On this Sunday, December 18, at 11:00 am on channel 9, KCRG, Pastor Harlan will be one of the panelists in a discussion on **How to Achieve Racial Reconciliation**, sponsored by the Inter-Religious Council of Linn County. If you are not in church or Sunday School, you are encouraged to watch and pray for racial reconciliation.

Wesley Pilgrimage Highlights

Thank you for the Love Gift which helped support my Wesley Pilgrimage to England!
Please join me on Wednesday, January 18 6:30 - 7:30 in the Parlor and I will be delighted to share some of the pilgrimage highlights!
Please RSVP to me at silg@stpaulsumc.org



Prayer requests for this devotion of caring will be added upon request and updated weekly. Names listed here under continued healing and grace will remain on the list for 3 weeks; if you would like a name on the list longer please let us know. Communicate by use of the prayer request boxes, phone 363-2058, or e-mail silg@stpaulsumc.org or harlan@stpaulsumc.org. Include a permission to share with others, or a request for confidentiality.

TGIW Elementary Drop-Off

Activities for Kindergarten through 4th grade start on Wednesday nights at 6:00. Please remember that children that age must be dropped off and picked up by an adult who signs them in and out. This ensures that leaders are in the rooms and ready before children arrive in the right room. In order to give the leaders time to arrive and prepare the room, please bring children to the room as close to 6:00 as possible. If they want to come early, please stay with them until leaders are ready. If you have questions or concerns, contact Pastor Allison (allison@stpaulsumc.org or 363-2058).

Make a Lasting Difference in the Life of a Child

The next semester of Sunday School runs from January through May, and we have an opening for a teacher. Lana Dewees needs a partner in the 3 year old room. More than one person can help. If you can help or have questions, contact Pastor Allison (allison@stpaulsumc.org or 363-2058).

Write Your Own Christmas Program

For next year's Children's Christmas Program, we'd like to use children's own reflections on the Christmas story. On the website you can find the Bible verses that tell the story and some questions for children to answer. These would be great questions for discussion with the family around Christmas. Have children, through grade 4, write their answers and turn them in to Pastor Allison (or email them!). We'll use as many as we can in next year's program. Just be aware, children may or may not read their own comments next year, depending on how many answers were submitted and who wants to speak in the program. If you have questions, contact Pastor Allison (363-2058 or allison@stpaulsumc.org).

Blood Pressure Checks Sunday, December 18

Blood pressure checks will be offered in the Library this Sunday, December 18, from 7:45-8:55 am. These are offered by our Parish Nurse, Kris Yahn.

UMW Members Please Note

Among the many good books for the 2012 UMW Reading Program on the book cart in our library are eleven **NEW** selections. "Hooray!" There are also newspapers giving reviews, as well as brochures for recording your progress. Remember: regular reading of *Response* magazine is also part of the program.

Start the year SIMPLY!

If you are overwhelmed and needing a chance to renew spiritually--come center yourself with God in a new class, *Voluntary Simplicity*, from the Northwest Earth Institute. This six-week discussion course will meet Wednesday evenings January 11 - February 15 from 6:30-7:30. Limited to 12. Nancy Anton-Jensen and Joyce Fleming will facilitate discussion among participants about our "stuff," our "work," our time, and our Earth. Each week we'll look at different aspects of bringing more simplicity, purpose, and focus to our lives. Nancy or Joyce can answer questions about the course. Please register by Jan. 3, so that books can be ordered (\$21). Contact the office at 363-2058 or Nancy at antonjensen@q.com to register. Joyce's phone 364-6357 or jfs321@aol.com.

Fill Your Stockings with Chocolate from the Youth

Youth will be selling chocolate all Sunday morning December 18. Chocolate makes a great Christmas gift and benefits youth mission trips.

Youth Lock In Dec. 30

All 6th - 12th graders and their friends are invited to a White Elephant Gift Exchange and Outer Space Prom at St. Paul's from 6 pm Friday, December 30 - 8 am Saturday, December 31. Youth are to bring a gift of \$10 or less that is something they would like to receive themselves. Youth are also asked to dress in an outer space theme but not spend more than \$10 on their outfit. Mark your calendar and join us for lots of fun!

Confirmation Retreat Jan. 6 - 8

All 7th and 8th graders are asked to attend a confirmation retreat at St. Paul's from Friday, January 6th to Sunday, January 8th. Mark this date on your calendar and plan to attend this important Christian Education event. More details to come.

New Member Class

Interested in joining St. Paul's and sharing your gifts in and through this community of faith? A **New Member class** will be held on six consecutive Sundays, January 8 through February 12, from 10:20-11:20 am. We will discuss and covenant about how we live out the membership promises of United Methodism through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Please plan to attend all sessions. Contact Pastor Sherrie at 363-2058 silg@stpaulsumc.org, to reserve your attendance or with questions.

Youth Pancake Breakfast January 15



The Youth will hold a pancake breakfast on Sunday, January 15, 8 am-1 pm, to raise money for this summer's Mission Trips.

Martin Luther King Celebration Jan 16, 7:00 pm

The 13th annual Dr. Percy and Lileah Harris "Who Is My Neighbor?" award will be presented at the service.

Dynamic Worship Assistance for Worship Café

We are looking for those *interested in flipping slides for the worship screens* during Worship Café at either 10:30 or 11:30. Please contact Laura Runkle if interested (lrunkle@stpaulsumc.org or 363-2058). Training will be provided. No experience necessary. If you worship at Worship Café, please consider this opportunity.



The 10:30 and 11:30 Praise Team is seeking musicians. **There is a special need for those who play percussion and bass guitar.** Contact Matt German, Director of Contemporary Worship, if you are interested (563-349-8175 or mgerman@stpaulsumc.org).

Christmas Shopping with Equal Exchange!



We've just placed an order for a great selection of coffees, teas, cocoa, almonds, and travel mugs in time for gifting this Christmas! Stop by the Wesley Center (formerly Social Hall) on Sunday mornings and check out the great assortment of products which also help support small scale farmers across the world as they build a better future for themselves

and their families.

Join One of these Planning Teams!

Benevolence Team: Meet with Pastor Sherrie and Pastor Harlan to develop this possible new format for our emergency assistance ministry. harlan@stpaulsumc.org

Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 16: Join the team who will help plan our evening Annual Worship Service and direct our *Who's My Neighbor* Award. Contact Jerry Matchett at matchett.jerry@gmail.com

Connection Event for Newcomers and New Members: Help plan a fun gathering event for all who have joined St. Paul's in the past 3 years...or will soon become members! Young or old, let us know if you would like to help! Contact Jim Steggall at

Save the Dates! Church Photo Directory in 2012!

The Reaching and Receiving Committee has reserved photography dates with Lifetouch Church Directories for a April 12 - 21 and June 5 - 9, 2012 for creating a new St. Paul's directory. Share these dates with your family so that we can include everyone!

Coming Events...

Dec 17	All Church Caroling
Dec 18	Children's Christmas Program
Dec 24	Christmas Eve Worship
Dec 25	Christmas Day Worship, Christmas Dinner
Dec 26	Church Building Closed
Dec 30	Youth Lock-In/\$10 Prom/White Elephant
Dec 31	No Worship
Jan 1	New Year's Worship
Jan 8	Regular Worship Schedule Resumes
Jan 15	Youth Pancake Breakfast
Jan 16	Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Worship

Hearing Assistance Devices for Worship

If you have a hearing impairment, whether slight or major, try one of our hearing assistance devices, which are available from the ushers. These devices are small (will fit in a shirt pocket) and have a small earpiece that "hooks" in the ear.

Harlan Gillespie, Senior Pastor
Sherrie Ilg, Associate Pastor
Phil Rogers, Minister of Youth

Allison Warren, Minister of Christian Education
Lloyd E. Brockmeyer, Minister of Congregational Care
Carol Tralau, Director of Music Ministries
Matt German, Contemporary Worship Leader

Outlook DEADLINE: EVERY MONDAY AT NOON
Outlook Editor: Laura Runkle (lrunkle@StPaulsUMC.org) 363-2058