



Saint Paul United Methodist Church
1320 Fernwood-Glendale Road
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage Paid
Spartanburg, SC
Permit No. 33

e-mail churchsecretary@stpumc.org

voice (864) 582-4040
Sunday Service at 10:00 A.M.

The Epistle

News For The Weeks Of November 21, & 28, and
December 5, & 12, 2022

www.stpumc.org web

(864) 583-0850 fax

Return Services Requested

2022 Gift Tree:

Saint Paul UMC is again sponsoring the Gift Tree for underprivileged children attending Drayton Mills Elementary School, many who are also supported by our Backpack Buddies Ministry. This year, the tree will be located on the altar in the Sanctuary beginning November 26th. We ask that when taking a sheets which will be gifts to the tree, with Thank you for your



gift tag that you sign your name and info. on the next to the tree. Please return your wrapped the tag attached, by Thursday, December 8th. continued generosity!

Volunteers: We are in need of volunteers to help out in our Sunday Children's Nursery and our Children's Church classroom beginning in January 2023! If you would be able to help us out, please contact Alex Smith, our Children's Director, at alexsmith13@gmail.com or 864-494-4989. You may also contact the Church Office and let us know. We'd like to get a large enough group of volunteers so each volunteer would only be scheduled once every few months. Thank you for your consideration in this important ministry - our children!



2022 Poinsettia Sales

Cost: \$10 each

Benefits: The United Methodist Women's missions which support women and children.

Sales period: November 20 through December 11

Please call the Church Office for information. Thank you!



The Pastor's Pen:

You really have to sympathize with retailers this time of year. How do you decide when to put out the Christmas merchandise and decorations? With candy, it is pretty easy. As soon as Halloween is over, bring out the Santa foil-covered chocolates, the red and green covered Hershey's Kisses, etc. The decorations, though, present a problem. Thanksgiving is in the way! You have to take down all the ghosts and goblins, the witches and bats. Then, put up the pilgrims and turkeys. Only to turn right around and replace those with Santa, snowflakes, and silver bells. I am almost surprised that the retailers haven't lobbied to cancel Thanksgiving altogether. However, several reasons come to mind as to why they haven't:

1. Many retailers have realized that there is no particular "Thanksgiving" merchandise, so they just go ahead and stock the Christmas items. Further, why waste time with the turkey and pilgrim stuff? So they just go ahead and decorate for Christmas as well.
2. They actually want us to sit down for a day and think about all that we have. This will lead us to think about all that we don't have. Which will lead us to #3:
3. The After Thanksgiving Day Sale, which now, of course, begins on Thursday. Thanksgiving on Thursday guarantees that a large portion of folks will not be working on Friday. What better way to work off that turkey than by trudging through the malls, wrestling through crowds, lugging bags laden with gifts, searching endlessly for "just the right thing."

Which leads me to one of my November/December pet peeves. I go to the store looking for a gift, let's say a sweater for my mom. Unfortunately, the stores have seen fit to take 90% of the "regular" merchandise, and replace it with Christmas "stuff." I don't want a sweater with Santa or reindeer or Christmas trees which can only be worn for a few select days in December. I want a nice sweater she can wear all winter. Somewhere in the recesses of a storeroom lies the sweater I want, but, alas, it has been pulled from the shelf for something that screams "Christmas."

Have you noticed, too, that many of the shelves and even the aisles are overflowing with items labeled as "stocking stuffers" or "the perfect gift." If these items are so "perfect," why is it that we only see them this time of the year? Why aren't they available to us to give for birthdays or anniversaries? Well, some *types* of these items are available the rest of the year, usually at *far* superior quality, but have now been exiled to the storeroom. Instead, ready at hand and underfoot are these specifically manufactured "gift sets" which are appealing because they offer us an easy way out after a long and frustrating search for the "real" merchandise now hidden away behind swinging doors.

Do I sound a bit cynical or jaded? Good, then I have communicated how I feel about the way the world sees Christmas. For many, Christmas is just the biggest marketing season of the year. It has nothing to do with a saving God, but everything to do with saleable goods.

Let me climb down off my soap box. I know I am writing to those who know what Christmas is really about. But I find myself sometimes losing sight of the manger as I struggle to meet the expectation of finding the right gift to put under a tree. I am sure that some of you have faced this dilemma. I want to suggest something that might help you keep things in perspective.

Let me go back up to reason #2 above. On Thanksgiving, we take stock of all that is important to us, and for most of us that is not "things" but, rather, family and relationships. Years ago my parents were moving and my mom divided up some of her Christmas decorations with me and my sisters. She gave me a box in which I found one that years ago I had given her and now she was giving back to me. It was a styrofoam ball with a wide ribbon wrapped around it and looped as a hanger. Dotting the sides were colorful, reflective discs held on by glue and hat pins. It was a Christmas ornament that I made for Mom when I was in kindergarten. Among the other items in my collection are a half-dozen "snowflakes" that my grandmother tatted. She showed me some things she was keeping — Christmas cards I made her when I was in elementary school.

Why am I talking about these things? Because they have no commercial value, but they represent time spent just to say, "You are special to me." It really is the thought that counts. 2000 years ago lots of babies were born, not a few of them in Bethlehem. But one was special because behind Him was a great thought. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son . . .*

This year I would suggest to you that the perfect Christmas gift cannot be bought straight off the shelf, and that it won't have much commercial value. It may be something you make or write. It may just be some time shared. It may be a phone call to family member or friend that you haven't spoken to in a long while. It may be teaching a child to sing "Away in a Manger," or taking some fruit to a shut-in. I challenge you to ponder and then give to at least one person a gift that comes from your heart, that says: "You are special." You just might discover that you want to give a few more of these gifts. Because these gifts give you a wonderful feeling in return.

May the upcoming holidays be holy days. May you and yours know the love of God, the joy of Christ, and the peace of the Holy Spirit!

Peace,

Jeremy



Altar & Narthex Flowers

Altar Flowers were given on November 13th for the Glory of God by Fern Powell in honor of her father, Robert Powell's, 93rd birthday.

Narthex Flowers were given on November 13th for the Glory of God by Barbara Barnes and Terry Mitchell in honor of their Anniversary.

Altar Flowers are given on November 20th for the Glory of God by Jack and Karen Moyer in loving memory of Jack's parents, Gene and Gladys Moyer.

Altar Flowers are given on November 27th for the Glory of God by Jeff and Brenda Ethington in memory of Jeff's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James Ethington.

Altar Flowers are given on December 4th for the Glory of God by Lillian Hudson in memory of the birthday of her mother, Eva Hudson.

Altar Flowers are given on December 11th for the Glory of God by Beth Hudson in memory of her father, Bill Hudson.

Narthex Flowers are given on December 11th for the Glory of God by Darrell and Judy Querin in honor of Darrell's birthday.

Financials & Attendance

	October 23	October 30	Nov. 6	Nov. 13
Received	\$13,902	\$8,493	\$9,029	\$10,896
Non-Contributed	\$52,392.50	\$26	\$638.39	\$367
Restricted	\$469	\$350	\$377.05	\$109
Total	\$66,763.50	\$8,869	\$10,044.44	\$11,372
Sunday School	39	45	44	48
Worship Service	112	98	103	132

Upcoming Events

Every Sunday	Pickleball for Members 1:00-3:00pm UMYF 4:30pm
1st Sunday of Each Month (except July)	UMM Meet-up 6:00pm (January 2023 meet-up will be Jan. 8)
2nd Sunday of Each Month	Blood Pressure Checks ~11:15am
2nd Monday of Each Month	Elsie Greer Circle 12:00pm (Do not meet in July & August)
3rd Monday of Each Month	Blanche Greer Circle 10:00am (Do not meet in July & August)
2nd Tuesday of Each Month	49ers 11:30am in Poston Hall
Every Wednesday	Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm
3rd Wednesday of Each Month	Anne Ratliff Circle 10:00am
1st & 3rd Friday of Each Month	Threads of Agape 10:00am
October 18, 25, November 1, 8	Fall Bible Study 6:30pm
November 23, 24	Church Office CLOSED in recognition of Thanksgiving on November 24 th
November 29, December 6, 13, 20	4-week Advent Bible Study 6:30pm
December 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 5:30pm
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26, 27	Church Office CLOSED in recognition of Christmas on December 25 th
December 31	New Year's Eve

*If you would like to put church-related information in the next Newsletter, please send an email with your "blurb" to churchsecretary@stpumc.org by December 12, 12:00pm.

Volunteers for November 20, & 27, and December 4, & 11, 2022

Communion Assistants 12/24	Lee Owens
Worship Greeters	11/20 Connie Muzzy, Bob McFarland 11/27 Darrell & Judy Querin 12/04 Lois Reinhardt, Bob McFarland 12/11 Lillian Hudson, Judy Lamb
Liturgists	11/20 Deb Schumann 11/27 Paula Fernandez 12/04 Chris Boyett 12/11 Jean Ogden
Ushers	11/20 Ray Parker, Phil Womble 11/27 Fern Powell, Kay McBee 12/04 Ben Graham, Austin Birch 12/11 Bill & Bobbi Duncan
Sound System	11/20 Don Wasness 11/27 Phil Womble 12/04 Guy Davis 12/11 A.D. Page, Jr.
Offering Depositors	11/20 Delton Vereen 11/27 Peter Hamel 12/04 Rebecca Parrish 12/11 Guy Davis

Altar Guild - November: Page Candler, Linda Hamel-Chairs; Abby Graham, Kadi Traxler, Bob Powell (Inactive);
December: Johnsie Page, Eileen Byers, Michele Bishop, Mary Page Yarborough, Amy Schanen, Nancy Curry

The 2023 Altar Flower Sign-up Sheet

is out! Please think about signing up to donate either the altar flowers or the narthex flowers on one of our Sundays during 2023. The cost for altar flowers is still \$61 and \$38 for narthex flowers. Please be sure to give your dedication. We will continue to have sign-ups available through December 11th. Thank you!

Pickleball For Members: There will be NO pickleball on Sunday, November 20th, in the Gym. Pickleball will resume on Sunday, November 27th, for any members interested in learning/playing. Thank you!

2023 Attraction Dining & Value Guides

are available in our church office. If you would like to purchase one of these coupon books, please contact the church office. The cost this year is \$25 each and supports our Saint Paul UMYF. Please consider buying one for yourself or for someone you know. They make great Christmas gifts!

Children & Youth Birthdays

November 20	Tripp Graham
December 8	Lynnie Birch
December 9	Charlie Birch
December 24	Benjamin Farley

Birthdays

November 22	Ann Karegeannes, Lisa Pappas
November 26	Kermit Williams, Maryellen Horton, Tom Lowrimore
November 29	Judy Womble, Elizabeth Fenner
December 1	Jon Berkeley
December 2	Kay Stinson
December 3	Lewis Moyer
December 4	Gregory Pappas, Jr.
December 5	Hamp Lindsey, Jack Moyer
December 6	Linda Fansher
December 7	Roland Smith
December 8	Marlene Gary
December 9	Lou Lindsey, Sarah Newman
December 11	Darrell Querin
December 13	Jeremy Howell
December 14	Larry Koller
December 15	Jim Hampton
December 18	Bob Muzzy
December 20	Bill Berkeley
December 22	Carol Mabry
December 24	Jay Hampton
December 25	Doris Luther, Jeff Newman
December 26	Diane Remeta