



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 churchsecr-

### The Epistle

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News For The Weeks Of  
December 4, 11, 18, & 25, 2023

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*Return Services Requested*

*Have a  
beautiful  
and blessed  
Christmas!*



## The Pastor's Pen

Several people have commented to me recently: "I can't believe it's already time for Christmas." The preacher in me wanted to say, "It's not time for Christmas, it's time for Advent." (Of course, Advent does mean that Christmas is almost here.) The human side of me joined their sense of hurriedness: "I know. I'm not ready for it to be Christmas yet."

As I sit down to write this article, I have a strong feeling of my own unpreparedness for Christmas. The holiday season is rushing toward us:

Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas. Family, friends, food. Turkey, ham, stuffing, cranberry sauce, pumpkin pie. Christmas parties, parades, cantatas. Shopping, caroling, bells ringing, lights glowing. All of this in the span of a few short weeks.

In the midst of the laughter, tears, excitement, and chaos, we will hear criticisms about commercialization and the reminders to remember the "reason for the season." And at some point, I fear, we will become so inundated with these comments that they, too, will become part of the routine of the season. We hear them but they really don't affect us anymore. We go our way doing our usual holiday routine.

This year I hope you will participate in a search—the search for the Christmas Moment. What is the Christmas Moment? It is hard to describe, but let me characterize it as that time when you find your heart and mind full of peace and goodwill toward all. A moment of exuberant joy, or of quiet contentment. It is the absolute delight in watching someone open a gift and you truly know that giving is more blessed than receiving. It is in seeing children strangely clad and nervously speaking, transformed into shepherds, beasts, angels, and wisemen. It is in the hush of a candlelight service, hearing the familiar story read and singing "Silent Night." It is sitting off to one side of the den or standing in the kitchen with someone's arm around your shoulder as you remember that someone is missing this year. It is hugging grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, cousins and in-laws, and being truly glad to see them, to feel the love that fills the house.

What makes the Christmas Moment happen? It is simple, yet difficult. The Christmas Moment occurs when we let the love of Christ fill us to the point that we take the risk of loving those around us, and accept their love for us. When it becomes more important for us to care for family and friends, than it is to care about what they have done or said in the past. When the beauty of a simple story told in plain words and glorious songs, helps us to cast aside our disbelief and accept that unto us a child is born, unto us the Son of God is given.

The search for the Christmas Moment begins in our hearts. It starts as we let the love of Christ fill us with peace and joy and good cheer to everyone we meet. May it happen over and over. May it begin and last the whole season.

In a moment, long, long ago, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The light of the world came to us in the form of a tiny baby. Let that light shine in your lives this season, so that the Christ of that moment, may be the Christ of this moment for you and all you greet.

May God richly bless each and every one of you this holiday

Peace,



*Jeremy*

# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>3</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent 9:00 Joint Sunday Sch.-Advent Study 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members	<b>4</b> 	<b>5</b> Hamp Lindsey 	<b>6</b> 6:30 Choir Rehearsal Linda Fansher 	<b>7</b> 5:45 PS Board Meeting Roland Smith 	<b>8</b> Marlene Gary Lynnie Birch 	<b>9</b>  Lou Lindsey Sarah Newman
<b>10</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 4:45 Youth United	<b>11</b> 9:00 Elsie Greer Circle 	<b>12</b> Newsletter Deadline 11:30 49ers 7:00 Alice Walker Circle (outside venue) 	<b>13</b> 6:30 Choir Rehearsal 	<b>14</b> Larry Koller 	<b>15</b> 10:00 Threads of Agape Jim Hampton 	<b>16</b> 
<b>17</b> Christmas Cantata <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 4:45 Youth United	<b>18</b> 	<b>19</b> 	<b>20</b> 6:30 Choir Rehearsal 	<b>21</b> 	<b>22</b> Carol Mabry 	<b>23</b> 
<b>24</b> Christmas Eve <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent</b> 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members 5:30 Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve Service Linda Hodge Jay Hampton 	<b>25</b> Christmas Day- Church Office CLOSED 	<b>26</b> Christmas Holiday- Church Office CLOSED 	<b>27</b> 6:30 Choir Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 	<b>29</b> 	<b>30</b> 
<b>31</b> New Year's Eve 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Worship Service 1:00 Pickleball for Members						

## Altar & Narthex Flowers

**Altar Flowers** are given on December 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Glory of God by Lillian Hudson in memory of the birthday of her mother, Eva Hudson.



**Altar Flowers** are given on December 10<sup>th</sup> for the Glory of God by Beth Hudson in memory of her father, Bill Hudson.

**Altar Flowers** are given on December 31<sup>st</sup> for the Glory of God by Bob and Connie Muzzy in loving

**2023 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 in the



area outside the Narthex. We ask that when taking a gift tag that you sign your name and info. on the sheets which will be next to the tree. Please return your wrapped gifts to Poston Hall, with the tag attached, by Sunday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you for your generosity!

**2023 Poinsettia Sales:** Cost: \$10 each

## Financials & Attendance

	Oct. 29	Nov. 5	Nov. 12
Received	\$4,337	\$10,552	\$6,180
Non-	\$292.69	\$61	\$3.75
Restrict	\$161	\$100.73	\$384
Total	\$4,790.69	\$10,713.73	\$6,567.75
Sunday	37	35	33
Worship	87	92	77

**Our Next Fellowship Meal** will be on November 30 at 5:30pm in Poston Hall. Please join us for chili, cornbread & all the fixin's! If you're willing to make/bring chili, cornbread, toppings or dessert, please call Lisa at 582-4040.

**The Hanging Of The Greens** will take place beforehand at 4:00pm. If you are able to help decorate for the holiday season, please be here at 4:00.

**A Joint Adult Sunday School Class** will begin on Sunday, December 3, at 9:00am in Poston Hall. This class will be a 4-week Advent Study. We hope to see you there.

**49ers:** The 49ers will be meeting on Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am in Poston Hall. We will provide fried chicken and drinks. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Roland Smith, with his Quartet, will be singing Christmas Carols! I will need a few volunteers to help set up and clean up. Please call me at 706-7936 if you can help. Susan Owens

## Our Christmas Cantata

will be held on December 17<sup>th</sup>. We hope you'll join us for this beautiful tradition!

## Our Candlelight Communion

**Christmas Eve Service** is at 5:30pm on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. Please join us for our special service.

**2024 Altar Flower Sign-up Sheet** is available through December 10<sup>th</sup>. We have sign-up inserts in the Sunday bulletins and also have blank copies at the Church Office. Please think about signing up to donate either the altar flowers or the

\*If you would like to put church-related information in the Newsletter, please send an email with your "blurb" to churchsecretary@stpumc.org before the Newsletter dead-