

**2025
Congregation Officers**

President-
Suzanne Umstott
Vice President-
Casey Colledge
Secretary-
Debbie Szymanski
Treasurer-
Stephanie Wade

2025 Congregation
Council Members

Education (Faith
Formation)-
Charity Friend
Evangelism-
Linda Zeller
Finance-
Brenda Aydelotte
Ministry in Daily Life-
Nancy Ayers
Personnel-
Brenda Aydelotte, Casey
Colledge, Sue Umstott
Property-
Todd Umstott
Social Ministry-
Marsha Tarte
Stewardship-
Casey Colledge
Worship & Music-
Liz Medcalf

St. Paul Church Staff

Pastor
The Reverend Ryan K.
Viands
Director of Music
David Rankin
Parish Administrator
Debbie Szymanski
Sexton
Brett Densock
Treasurer
Stephanie Wade

**PROCLAIMING A TIMELESS CHRIST
IN A CHANGING WORLD SINCE 1794**



THE SPIRE

SAINT PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH † CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND

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Email: debbie@stpaulcumberland.org

December 2025

Pastor's Ponderings

Caught Up in God's Story of Salvation



Where are you in the Christmass story? Are you physically present but watching from afar in your mind? Are you seeing it unfold as if for the first time? Is the story so familiar that it has long since ceased to surprise you? Or does Christmass telling evoke renewed awe and wonder?

What if you imagined yourself as one of the shepherds tending your sheep in the fields outside of Bethlehem when God's angels appeared? How might you have reacted to being in the presence pf God's glory?

Continued on page 2

continued from page 1

Consider these two observations about the shepherds in Saint Luke's narrative: they were engaged in ordinary, routine activities; they encountered God. When was the last time you encountered God in the ordinary moments of your life? What was it like for you to encounter the HOLY?

But wait, you say to yourself. The shepherds had the advantage of a night sky shining with angels and the benefit of a clear message about God's presence and activity: *"Do not be afraid; to you is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you."* Of course they encountered God!

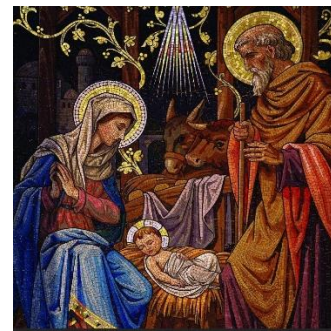
Where are our signs? How do we recognize that we are encountering God? Our signs are things we can see and hear and taste and touch: water, bread, wine, word, and one another. God comes to us in the flesh, in a body like you and me. In visible, touchable signs, we encounter the one who came to live in the midst of our ordinary lives so that we might be caught up in God's life-giving story of Salvation!

When we recognize evidence of God's presence with us, for these moments surely happen, what is our response? Surprised by joy, spurred into action, we, like the shepherds, go and tell what we have seen and what we have heard! *"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those of whom he favors!"*



Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

**Wednesday,
December 24th
7:00 p.m.**



The Great Solemnity of Christmas Day

**Thursday,
December 25th
10:00 a.m.**

Church COUNCIL

We would like to announce the hiring of Brett Densock as our new sexton here at St. Paul's. Brett has many years of experience and we are thankful to have him join our staff. Welcome Brett.

To me, the holidays are a joyful time of sharing and giving. As we enter the holiday season please be mindful of some of the programs and events going on here at St. Paul's. We are always looking for volunteers to assist with our many projects. If you feel called to help, please reach out to me or a member of the council.

"Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas." - Dale Evans

Wishing everyone a very merry and blessed Christmas season.

Sue Umstott, Council President



Soon it will be time for hanging of the greens, garland and setting up Christmas trees which is scheduled for Friday, December 19th at 5:00 p.m. **In order for this to be successful we need volunteers.** Please contact the church office 301-722-6604 or debbie@stpaulcumberland.org if you're able to help.

Taste and See

Psalm 34:8 invites us to personally experience God's goodness through action:

Prayer – His Word – Meditation. As we pray to God for wisdom, giving our requests to Him, asking in the name of Jesus who bridges the gap between us and God, we “taste and see” into a more personal relationship with God.

This personal relationship with God is not hard. As soon as we become children of God, we receive the Holy Spirit, who will work on our hearts. Although we may not see/feel changes immediately, we have a promise that truths will become clear.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

John 14:26:

As we begin Advent, let us “taste and see”.

“Taste and see that the Lord is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.”

Psalm 34:8



The tradition of decorating the altar and chancel with poinsettias will continue this year. Orders will be taken until **Friday, December 5th**. Each plant is \$7.50.

Please call the church office to place your order or place it in the offering plate marked “poinsettia order” and advise us how you wish to have your floral offering designated in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

Be sure to let us know if you will be picking up your plant.



Please join us for fellowship and a potluck luncheon following worship on Sunday, December 7th. Please sign up on the bulletin board with the number in your family attending and the dish you plan to bring.

Let Us Pray With You

Sunday Morning Prayers

Prayer requests called into the church office
or received through pastoral visits.

Prayed for during Sunday morning worship.

Intercessory Prayer Team Prayers

**During the holiday season the prayer team is ready to
pray with you and for you.**

Prayer requests placed in the prayer box shown
below, (form provided), received by email to
mutmab43@gmail.com, or by text to 240-727-1798.



**These requests are prayed for daily by the
Prayer Team and are held in complete
confidentiality.**

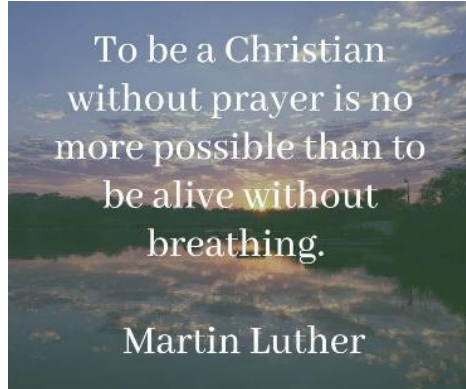
Kathleen Ball - Prayer Team Coordinator

Paint and Sip
November 14, 2025



Please join us on Tuesday,
December 16th for a pizza dinner
and Christmas Caroling. We will
meet in fellowship hall at 5:30 p.m.

All ages are welcome!



Please join us on **Monday, December 8, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.** in the Luther Chapel to pray for the Church at large, for our world, and for Saint Paul.

“Worship and intercession must go together; the one is impossible without the other. Intercession means that we rouse ourselves up to get the mind of Christ about the one for whom we pray.” — *Oswald Chambers*

"The value of persistent prayer is not that God will hear us, but that we will finally hear God"



December – 10 – Caitlin Hudgins

20 – Gregg Mazzone

25 – Sharon Clark

29 – Grayson Green

Reminder to RSVP!
Family Gathering and Fun Time
Sunday, December 14 from 5:00pm to 7:00pm



Join us for a fun time with family, friends, and neighbors!

Meet us on Sunday, December 14 beginning at 5:00pm at the Moon Glo Roller Skating Rink (12700 Bedford Rd NE). We will skate, make angel and snowmen crafts, and enjoy a dinner of Mac and Cheese, Veggies, and Christmas Cookies.

Our family's calendars and lives are filled with so many activities, especially at this time of year. Set aside a time to enjoy one another's company, not have to worry about making a meal, and for families to just have fun together! There is no cost to families for this event. A grant was provided under the umbrella of the GenOn Christian Parenting Project. The project seeks to build relationships between family members and between families and churches so that all people feel loved, cared for, and have a sense of belonging. Each family will receive a bag to take home with activities to encourage faith talk during the Christmas season.

RSVP needed.

**Please sign up on the bulletin board, text, or email Debbie Streicher.
(703-303-7255 or dstreicher52@gmail.com)**

Blue Christmas Prayer Service
Sunday, December 21 at 6:00pm in the Chapel



The longest night refers to the winter solstice that happens on Sunday, December 21st. It is the day of the year when we experience the fewest hours of daylight. It is often referred to as Blue Christmas and a time when many churches hold a worship or prayer service. This is a time of reflection for those who encounter the Christmas season as a difficult one because of grief or sadness. It is a quiet time for meditation and prayer.

There will be a light dinner of soup and salad preceding the prayer service in Fellowship Hall at 5:00pm followed by the Blue Christmas Prayer Service in the chapel on the lower level at 6:00pm.



Bountiful Blessings

We are asking for donations of tissues. If you can help us assist our community neighbors, please put items in the box inside the parking lot entrance to the church.

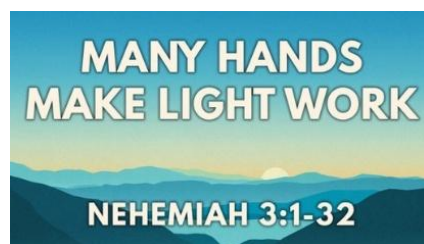


Annual Festival of Lessons and Carols for Christmas

Sunday, December 21, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Emmanuel Episcopal Parish, 16 Washington St., Cumberland, MD

As part of its annual activities, Mountainside Baroque will again welcome the Scholars of St. Cecilia, Mountainside Baroque's resident chamber choir, to "ring in" the Christmas season with an ecumenical "Festival of Lessons and Carols," featuring seasonal music, traditional carols, and readings by local clergy and officials. The event is free and open to the public, though a free-will offering will be received. The church is handicapped accessible. Please join us for a light refreshments reception after the service.



KITCHEN CLEANUP/WORK DAY

We would like to take some time to clean and organize the kitchen in Fellowship Hall. If you would be able to help us with that, please mark your calendar - clean up day will be Saturday January 17 starting at 9:30 AM (weather permitting of course). We look forward to having you as they say "many hands make light work".

The First Sunday of Advent

December 1st, 2025





Wednesday 5:15 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	December 3 Hand Bell rehearsal Vespers-Chapel Art class-coffee house
Thursday 5:30 p.m.	December 4 Confirmation instruction
Friday 6:00-9:00	December 5 Beginnings Parent's Night Out
Sunday 8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:45 a.m.	December 7 Choir rehearsal Worship Potluck Luncheon
Monday 11:00 a.m. 6:00-8:00	December 8 Prayers in the chapel Art class-fellowship hall
Tuesday 5:30 p.m.	December 9 Council meeting
Wednesday 5:15 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	December 10 Hand bell rehearsal Vespers-lower chapel
Thursday 4:00-6:00 5:30 p.m.	December 11 Bountiful Blessings Confirmation instruction
Saturday 10:00 a.m.	December 13 Grief Support group
Sunday 8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:45 a.m. 5:00-7:00	December 14 Choir rehearsal Worship Book Study Faith and Family Fun at Moon Glo Skating Rink
Monday 6:00-8:00	December 15 Bountiful Blessings delivery Art class-fellowship hall

Tuesday 5:30 p.m.	December 16 Pizza and Christmas caroling
Wednesday 5:15 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	December 17 Hand bell rehearsal Vespers-lower chapel
Thursday 5:30 p.m.	December 18 Confirmation instruction
Friday 2:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m.	December 19 Beginnings Holiday program Hanging of the Greens
Sunday 8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:45 a.m. 5:00 p.m.	December 21 Choir rehearsal Worship Book Study Blue Christmas-fellowship hall and chapel
Monday 6:00 p.m.	Joy Book Club
Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	December 22 Beginnings holiday break begins December 24 Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Thursday 10:00 a.m.	December 25 The Great Solemnity of Christmas Day
Friday	December 26 Fellowship hall reserved
Saturday	December 27 Fellowship hall reserved
Sunday 8:45 a.m. 10:00 a.m. 11:45 a.m.	December 28 Choir rehearsal Worship-Lessons & Carols Book Study