



THE SPIRIT



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | DECEMBER 2025



St. Paul UMC

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Muskogee, OK 74401

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Custodian, A.J. McClellen

The Holiness of the Season . . .

As we enter December, our church finds itself deep in the journey of our *Kingdom Come* series. Each week we have listened for God's promise of a world renewed, a world marked not by fear or division but by justice, humility, and hope. These themes are not abstract ideas. They are invitations to let our lives, our congregation, and our community be shaped by the coming reign of God.

This season reminds us that God does not wait for ideal conditions to bring light. Christ enters a world of empire, uncertainty, and longing. He comes quietly, yet powerfully, beginning a kingdom that grows not through force but through faith, courage, compassion, and everyday acts of love. Advent calls us to prepare room not only in our sanctuaries but in our habits, relationships, and priorities. It invites us to expect God to work in ways that surprise us, stretch us, and ultimately bless us.

As Christmas Eve approaches, I want to encourage you to be present, both spiritually and physically. Our services are moments when the truth of the season becomes visible: candles lifted against the darkness, scripture proclaimed, the familiar carols echoing with new meaning. And more than anything, these services are opportunities for us to welcome guests who may be taking their first steps back into church, or into faith altogether.

Your invitation could make all the difference. A neighbor. A coworker. A friend whose year has been heavy. Someone who needs a place to rest, breathe, and hear again that God has drawn near. Advent and Christmas offer a unique openness in people's hearts; let us meet that openness with hospitality, warmth, and joy.

My prayer is that this December will not simply be busy, but holy. That in the midst of gatherings, gift-giving, and decorating, we will remember why we celebrate at all: because the Word became flesh and dwelled among us, full of grace and truth. Because the kingdom we long for has already begun in Jesus Christ. Because light still shines, and the darkness has not overcome it. Let's walk through this month with expectation. Let's worship with gratitude. And let's step into Christmas ready to receive again the astonishing good news that God has come to us, and that his kingdom is breaking in even now. I look forward to seeing you in worship this Advent and on Christmas Eve. May this season fill your heart with hope and renew our shared calling to live as people of the coming King.

Rev. Dylan

Ephesians 6:19

Spontaneous Nativity

All Children have a part!



December 14th
During 11 AM Worship



REACH PEOPLE FOR CHRIST, DEVELOP DEEPLY COMMITTED CHRISTIANS

Spontaneous Children's Nativity

On Sunday, December 14, during the 11:00 a.m. Worship service the children will present "A Spontaneous Nativity" play with all children present having a part to play!

Bring the family, you do not want to miss this!!



Muskogee Community Chorus

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 8

THEOLOGY MINUTE

WITH PASTOR DYLAN

The second "Article of Religion" focuses on Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God who "was made very man." As United Methodists, we believe that the Son is of one being with the Father, truly God from all eternity. In the fullness of time, this same eternal Word took on our human nature, born of the Virgin Mary.



In Jesus, two full and perfect natures – divine and human – are united in one person, never to be divided. He is not partly God and partly human, but fully both at once. In this one Lord Jesus Christ, God comes near to us, speaks our language, shares our weakness, and bears our sin.

Through his suffering, death, and resurrection, Christ reconciles us to the Father and offers salvation "for the sins of the whole world." Our hope, our forgiveness, and our future all rest in him.



St. Paul has a tradition of decorating the Sanctuary Chancel during Advent with beautiful poinsettia plants in honor or memory of a person or special event. If you would like to participate, please fill out a form or contact the Church Office by Wednesday, December 17. The dedications are printed as a special keepsake insert. The cost is \$17.50 and payments can be made online at our website or by placing checks marked for poinsettia in the offering plate. Dedications can be phoned or emailed in to the church office.

If you would like to keep your poinsettia after the holidays, please wait to take it home until after the 11:00 a.m. Worship service on Sunday, December 28.

Church phone number & email:

918-687-7571

church@stpaulmuskogee.com





Muskogee BRIDGES OUT OF POVERTY
Bridges Out of Poverty GRADUATION DAY!
6:30 p.m. Tues., Dec. 9

You are invited to come celebrate the graduates from the Muskogee Bridges Out of Poverty Fall 2024 program. The participants have diligently attended classes each week at St. Paul to learn skills for successful lifestyle habits. We are proud to host this amazing, nationally-recognized program. See you at 6:30 p.m. on Tues., Dec. 9.



Join us for a worshipful and reverent Blue Christmas service that honors those who have lost loved ones or are experiencing grief or sadness during the holiday season.



Backpack FOOD Ministry
10:00 AM Wednesday
December 10
in the weight room



Come and spend about 45 minutes and pack "assembly style" food bags that will be delivered to over 125 children in our local schools. It's such a fun time with friends!

Can you help to receive the food delivery orders? Contact Glenda Broome at 918-781-2733.

If you're not sure this is for you, come once and see for yourself how fun and rewarding it can be!

(We will not meet the week of Thanksgiving)



New Life SS Christmas Party
5:00 p.m. Sunday, December 7
at the home of the Stout's.



Communion & Candlelight Services
Christmas Eve Worship - Wed. Dec. 24
4:00 p.m.* & 9:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

**Childcare provided for 3 & under at the 4:00 p.m. Service.*



DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
30 Worship Services 8:45 AM - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 AM - Sunday School 11:00 AM - Sanctuary	1 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM Disciple Fast Track 1 PM & 6:15 PM	2 11:00 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Bridges	3 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM 10AM Backpacks 7 PM Chancel Choir	4 10AM Ladies Handbell Choir Rehearsal	5 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM	6 YOUTH GROUP Angel Tree service project SHOPPING DAY
7 COMMUNION Worship Services 8:45 AM - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 AM - Sunday School 11:00 AM - Sanctuary 	8 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM Disciple Fast Track 1 PM & 5:45 PM (last class until Feb.) 7:30 PM Handels' MESSIAH	9 11:00 AM Bible Study 	10 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM 5:30 PM DINNER CHURCH 6 PM Youth Group 7 PM Chancel Choir	11 10AM Ladies Handbell Choir Rehearsal	12 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM 	13
14 Monthly Potluck Angel Tree Gifts Due Worship Services 8:45 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary Spontaneous Nativity	15 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM	16 11:00 a.m. Bible Study	17 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM 10AM Backpacks 6:00 p.m. BLUE CHRISTMAS	18	19 Learning Tree 9 AM - 2 PM 	20
21 Worship Services 8:45 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary	22 5:30 PM Finance Mtg	23 11:00 a.m. Bible Study	24 4 PM & 9 PM Candlelight Service in the Sanctuary	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS 	26	27
Christmas Break - No Learning Tree						
28 Worship Services 8:45 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary	29	30 11:00 a.m. Bible Study	31	1 Happy New Year Welcome 2026	2	3
Church Offices Monitored* *Monitored via phones & email. Call before coming to the church to ensure someone is there.						
Christmas Break - No Learning Tree						
Worship Services 8:45 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary			6 PM Youth Group 7 PM Chancel Choir			

Weekly at St. Paul:

Monday:

AM 7:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)
9:00 Learning Tree Preschool
CARD Senior Nutrition Program
PM 1:00 Disciple Fast Track Study
6:15 Disciple Fast Track Study (end 12/8)

Tuesday:

AM 7:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)
9:00 CARD Senior Nutrition Program
9:30 Staff Meeting
11:00 Open Bible Study
PM 12:00 Al-Anon
5:30 Bridges Out of Poverty
6:00 Emotions Anonymous (1st & 3rd)

Wednesday:

AM 7:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)
9:00 Learning Tree Preschool
CARD Senior Nutrition Program
PM 6:00 Youth Group (6-12 Grade)
7:00 Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Thursday:

AM 7:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)
9:00 CARD Senior Nutrition Program
10:00 Ladies Handbell Choir
PM 6:30 It's in the Book (AA) Women only
6:30 Good Shepherd Clinic (1st & 3rd)

Friday:

AM 7:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)
9:00 Learning Tree Preschool
CARD Senior Nutrition Program

Saturday:

AM 9:00 Donut Hole Group (AA)

Sunday:

AM 8:45 Worship—Rowsey Chapel
10:00 Sunday School
11:00 Worship—Sanctuary

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Mon.—Thurs. 8AM-4PM & Fri. 8AM-3PM





A Program of Prison Fellowship®

**ALL ANGEL TAGS
MUST BE
SIGNED OUT.**

Angel tags are ready in the Atrium.

If you prefer to give a donation, the YOUTH GROUP loves serving as personal shoppers. Mark your check or envelope Angel Tree.

Bring wrapped gifts back with the angel tag attached by **Sunday, December 14.**

It's a WONDERFUL TIME of year!

2025 HOLIDAY Planning Guide

HOLIDAY EVENTS

5:30 p.m. Sun., Dec. 7—New Life Party

7:30 p.m. Mon., Dec. 8—Messiah

6:30 p.m. Tues., Dec. 9—BOP Graduation

5:30 p.m. Wed., Dec. 10—Dinner Church

6:00 p.m. Wed., Dec. 17—Blue Christmas

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Wed., December 24

4:00 p.m.* & 9:00 p.m. Services
Communion Candlelight Worship

* Childcare provided at 4PM only.



Church Offices Closed

Dec. 25, 2025 to Jan. 1, 2026

Emails & phones will be monitored.

DISCIPLE
FAST TRACK

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

MONDAYS 1:00 P.M. & 6:15 P.M.

in the large conference room.

(last class session on Dec. 8)



THE HALLS ARE DECKED!

St. Paul has been decorated for Advent and Christmas by a spectacular team. Our thanks to: Michele, Peggy, Lee, Marilyn, Gabe, Tiffany, Virgil, Patty, Darla, Jennifer, Suzanne, Kathy, Sherry, Barbara, Jamie, Margaret, Omar, Kelly, Manny, Jeff, and Diane. It took just two delightful hours to perform this minor miracle.



Church Potluck



**Monthly POTLUCK
Sunday, December 14**

Make your favorite holiday side dish or dessert for our potluck meal after the 11AM service on Sunday, Dec. 14. Bring your friends & family to enjoy a fun time together!

Rehearsals 7PM Wednesdays

**CHANCEL
CHOIR**

LEARNING TREE PRESCHOOL

Dear Friends and Family,

We've had such a fun and full November at Learning Tree! From dressing up for Halloween to exploring all things fall to collecting fall leaves for our art projects, the kids have been learning with so much joy. Our Art Show was a wonderful success, and we are deeply grateful for everyone who came out to support our little artists. We wrapped up the month with a delightful Poetry Slam, where the children proudly shared their creative rhymes before heading into Thanksgiving break.



Our poetry slam was so much fun!

Looking ahead, Friday, December 19 will be our last day of school for the semester, and we're making it extra special with a Christmas Pajama Day and a festive visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus! We can't wait to celebrate the joy of the season together. Wishing you and your families peace, joy, and a very Merry Christmas!

Abigail Shaw

Learning Tree Director & Teacher



A Learning Tree Fall Poem

by Joanne Nilsson

Fall has come and leaves fall down,
so many colors—orange, yellow, and brown.
Miss Abigail said, “We have so much!”
Pastor Dylan agreed, “We have a bunch!”
Paisley said, “Let's put them in a box,”
but Ferris said, “We surely will not.”
Elijah exclaimed, “I have a pail!”
“There's too many!” Beckett wailed.
Tatum found a really big bag,
but Kyler said, “How will we play tag?”
Ayla wanted to bring them in the house.
Memphis said, “We'll probably find a mouse.”
Kynslee said, “Let's stuff them in a hat,”
but Silas said, “That hat would be too fat.”
What shall we do? How can we have fun? The
class agreed to toss leaves and run.



St. Paul Spirit December 2025

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY



December is here, and our hearts are full as we continue journeying through Pastor Dylan's Kingdom Come Advent series together! In November, our kids had the chance to live out what God's kingdom looks like: peaceful, hopeful, and powerful. Through hands-on projects and service, we learned to carry each of these traits with us and share God's love to the world. We created bright, colorful placemats to decorate the free Thanksgiving meal served at St. Paul, reminding our neighbors that they are loved, seen, welcome, and celebrated at God's table. We also built an entire "kingdom" out of magnet tiles, connecting each piece together as we talked about how God's kingdom grows when we work together in love and kindness.



Our Fall Block Party on November 1st was an incredible success! We welcomed over 170 guests for games, food, laughter, and community fun. Thank you to everyone who came out and made the afternoon so special!

Upcoming Events

Looking ahead, mark your calendars for Sunday, December 14th! During our church-wide Christmas Potluck, we'll have a special visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, with an opportunity for photos. During worship that morning, the children will help lead a Spontaneous Nativity during the Children's Moment! Costumes provided and plenty of joyful noise encouraged! And don't forget: on Sunday, December 28th, we'll host a hot chocolate bar and fun for the kids in the gym to close out our holiday season. More details coming very soon!



We celebrated All Saints Day by making tissue-paper "stained glass" windows to honor the saints in our lives

It's a joy to walk this Advent journey with your families. May your December be full of wonder and God's peace!

Grateful for this family of faith,
Abigail Shaw
Children's Director



Birthdays

12/1 Christina Booher	12/15 Meacham Pool
12/1 Millie Hilfiger	12/16 Ineta Bebb
12/2 Andrew Heymans	12/17 Nita Thompson
12/3 Bob Woods	12/19 Jim Hall
12/4 Michelle Johnson	12/20 Patty Ramirez
12/5 Kathryn Durland	12/21 Doug Hendricks
12/5 Kenny Sambrano	12/22 Gabriel Ramirez
12/5 Zollie Saxon	12/22 Jeff Mueller
12/6 Weldon Key	12/22 Luke Hall
12/6 Vann Beard	12/22 Aislyn Hensley
12/8 Lisa Schilt	12/23 Kay Rogers
12/9 Scott Scenter	12/25 Carole Cole
12/10 Jim Davis	12/25 Jaime Gile
12/12 Billie Flinn	12/31 Jenee' Hensley
12/14 Samuel Hensley	12/31 Don Anderson



Anniversaries

12/1	Kem & Becky Hearon
12/1	Bob & Gayle Valor
12/17	Michael & Nannette Morrison
12/21	Carlile & Linda Roberts
12/22	Jim & Jennifer Neely
12/27	Steven & Erin Goss
12/30	Fred & Susan Winters



Altar Flowers

to the glory of God

Dec. 7 Carole Elliott, in loving memory of her husband, Charles.



Staff Love Offering

Donations towards the staff love offering may be given until 12/14.



USHER MINISTRY

8:45 a.m. Ushers

1st Sun.:	Jim Davis, Mark Unger
2nd Sun.:	Marilyn Gilder, Jo Gibbs
3rd Sun.:	Omar Reed, Virgil Rose
4th Sun.:	Don Elgin, Jim Erb
5th Sun.:	Bob & Bonnie Belle Dunkelberger



11:00 a.m. Ushers

1st Sun.:	Mike Pierceall, Michael Blakeslee, Ted Hine, Ed Johnson, Weldon Key
2nd Sun.:	Ron Wright, Don Elgin, Todd Graybill, John Griffin, Scott Kanny, Manny Ramirez
3rd Sun.:	Johnny Broome, Kelly Beach, Scott Hensley, Bob Woods
4th Sun.:	Erin Goss, Diane Beach, Jenee' Hensley, Amber Hilfiger, Patty Ramirez, Margaret Thacker
5th Sun.:	Roy Flinn, Taylor Foster



GREETER MINISTRY

8:45 a.m.

1st Sun.:
2nd Sun.:
3rd Sun.:
4th Sun.:
5th Sun.:

11:00 a.m.

Ed & Pam Johnson
J. Boydston, Ted Hine
B. Flinn / B. Hearon
Sidney Daniels
J. Boydston/B. Hearon

VAN MINISTRY

1st Sun.:	Drivers: Kelly & Diane Beach Caller: Linda Foster
2nd Sun.:	Drivers: Scott & Sam Hensley Caller: Joan Odell
3rd Sun.:	Driver: Robbie Evans, Tamra Scherer Caller: Renee McMillin
4th Sun.:	Driver: Roy & Billie Flinn Caller: Margaret Thacker
5th Sun.:	Driver: Andrew Heymans Caller: Sidney Daniels