



THE SPIRIT



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | JANUARY 2026

St. Paul UMC

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LETTER FROM THE PASTOR . . .

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

January always arrives quietly, like a fresh page that has not yet learned our handwriting. After the rush of Advent and Christmas, we step into a season that feels open and full of possibility. I love that about the New Year. It reminds me that God is already ahead of us, shaping days we have not yet lived into, preparing a church we have not yet fully become, and inviting us forward with anticipation rather than anxiety.

One verse that keeps stirring in my heart as we begin 2026 is Galatians 6:9: *"So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up."* By God's grace, we had a great 2025, but I am even more excited for what 2026 has in store. We start this year by trusting that God is already building it beneath our feet.

I am especially excited about our upcoming Blood Drive on January 11th. Every donation quite literally becomes a gift of life to our neighbors. This year, the drive also carries a second layer of impact: it serves as a fundraiser for our Learning Tree preschool, supporting the next generation of learners, leaders, and image-bearers of God. And, because nothing says hope like showing up for your community with sleeves rolled up, every donor that day becomes part of something larger than a single appointment. You are part of a story of care that extends far beyond our building's walls.

We are also continuing our *Start Here* sermon series into January. The New Year often comes with pressure to reinvent ourselves overnight. But faith rarely works that way. What this series keeps reminding us of is that God honors the honest starting point, no matter how small or uncertain it feels. If you have missed a week or five, you have not missed your moment. Grace meets us where we are, not where we think we should be.

Thank you for stepping into this year with steady hearts and open hands. I truly believe 2026 will be a year where ordinary faithfulness stacks up into extraordinary witness.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Dylan





Theology Minute with Pastor Dylan

The third Article of Religion affirms the heart of Christian faith: Christ truly rose from the dead.

His resurrection was not symbolic or spiritual only, but real and bodily. Jesus took up his full human nature again, showing that God's saving work touches every part of what it means to be human.

After rising, Christ ascended into heaven and now reigns with the Father, not distant from us but interceding for us and guiding his church. This article also reminds us that Christ will return to judge the living and the dead. Far from being a threat, this promise is a source of hope. It tells us that injustice, violence, and sorrow will not have the last word.

The resurrection is God's great declaration that life is stronger than death, mercy stronger than sin, and love stronger than every power that seeks to diminish us. Because Christ lives, we can live with confidence, integrity, and purpose. And as we await his return, we follow him in the work of healing, reconciliation, and holy living.

Rev. Dylan

- Ephesians 6:19

Celebrating the baptism of Carmen & Eleanor Dunkelberger



Learning Tree Staff with Mr. & Mrs. Claus





DINNER CHURCH

Dinner Church is an open community dinner for friends and family to gather. Come and enjoy a meal together.



**Come enjoy a meal with us at
5:30 p.m. on the 2nd & 4th
Wednesdays of the month.**

To volunteer contact **Diane Beach 918-680-0639** or the Church Office at 918-687-7571

WELCOME TO LEARNING TREE



Wendy Michael



January Meetings
Monday, January 26
5:30 p.m. Finance Comm.
6:30 p.m. Church Council

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
28 	29	30 11:00 a.m. Bible Study	31 2026 Happy New Year!	1	2	3 
CHURCH OFFICES "SOFT" CLOSE						
4 COMMUNION SERVICE Worship Services 9:00 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary Un-Decorating	5 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	6 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Bridges Out of Poverty	7 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool 6:00 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	8 10:00 a.m. Ladies Handbell Choir Reh.	9 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	10 
11 Youth & Children's Appreciation Day! Worship Services 9:00 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary ALL Committees Mtg 10-2 BLOOD DRIVE	12 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	13 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Bridges Out of Poverty	14 10:00 a.m. Backpack Ministry - Weight Rm 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool 5:30 pm DINNER CHURCH 6:00 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	15 10:00 a.m. Ladies Handbell Choir Reh.	16 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	17
18 Worship Services 9:00 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED	20 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Bridges Out of Poverty	21 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool 6:00 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	22 10:00 a.m. Ladies Handbell Choir Reh.	23 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	24
25 Worship Services 9:00 am - Rowsey Chapel 10:00 am - Sunday School 11:00 am - Sanctuary St. Paul 101	26 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool 5:30 pm Finance Comm. 6:30 pm Church Council	27 11:00 a.m. Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Bridges Out of Poverty	28 10:00 a.m. Backpack Ministry - Weight Rm 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool 5:30 pm DINNER CHURCH 6:00 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir	29 10:00 a.m. Ladies Handbell Choir Reh.	30 9am-2pm Learning Tree Preschool	31

Weekly at St. Paul:

Monday:

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

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

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



BRING IT HOME

Vision for St. Paul Children's Ministry in 2026

Hi Parents, Grandparents, & Anyone Raising Kids:

Have you ever felt a little unsure about how faith is supposed to fit into everyday family life? Maybe you're wondering if you're doing enough, saying the right things, or where to start in the first place. In 2026, Children's Ministry is stepping into a new season of discipleship we are calling Bring It Home. This vision grows from a simple and hopeful truth: the most lasting faith formation does not happen only within church walls, but in the everyday rhythms of home life. Whether or not caregivers see themselves as faith leaders, they are already the most influential voices in their children's spiritual lives.

I know many parents carry quiet pressure and sometimes real anxiety when it comes to their family's faith life. We hear it all the time: "I don't read my Bible enough," or apologies for children being loud, wiggly, or messy in worship. Please hear this clearly: this is not about doing more or getting it perfect. It is about starting small, being present, and trusting that God is already with you in the life you are living right now. Your kids are not interrupting church, they are participating in it. This is not somebody else's church that families are sitting inside. This church belongs to Christ, who has given everything to draw you closer.



Parents and adults in a child's home are the first and most significant influence in that child's spiritual life. With that in mind, we aim to support each family in four simple ways: **HOME.**

H – Habits of Faith

Forming spiritual rhythms in everyday life

O – Open Conversations

Creating space for questions, wonder, and curiosity

M – Meaningful Connections

Building community around families

E – Embrace

Owning the sacred calling of spiritual leadership at home





Small Moments Add Up

Faith is not built through huge gestures. It grows through small, faithful moments repeated over time. A prayer at bedtime, a question at the dinner table, or a story shared on the way to school can shape faith more deeply than we often realize. In my time working in children's ministry, I have learned that parents often overestimate what they can teach in a day and vastly underestimate what they can teach in a month. Our hope is to work together to build rhythms that help your family love God and love one another more deeply, without adding more pressure or more to your plate.

Faith is Formed Together

If you are not raising kids in your home right now, this vision still belongs to you. Do you know what the number one topic is in our kids' classrooms at St. Paul? You. Each Sunday, children notice the faithfulness of the adults around them. They talk about parents who work hard, grandparents who pray, volunteers who show kindness, and church members who make them feel safe and seen. It sounds like this: "I'm drawing this picture for my mom because I love her," or "Can we pray for my dad because he's tired?" or "Ms. Barbara always helps me," or "The bus driver this morning was so nice!" Discipleship is not a one-way exchange. When children are welcomed fully into the life of the church, everyone's faith grows stronger.

**GOD CHOSE YOU TO GUIDE
THE KIDS IN YOUR LIFE.
TRUST HE MADE
THE RIGHT CHOICE.**

You can create a culture of belonging around families! A kind word, a smile, or a simple "I'm so glad you're here" matters more than you might think. Taking the time to reassure parents that their children belong in worship and that this church is theirs, too, is holy work.

Support Us in Prayer

Lord, many parents feel off the map and unsure of the path ahead. We pray they would hear God's voice with clarity and that the Holy Spirit would fill them with peace, love, and confidence to guide their children in the way that leads to life.

God has uniquely selected and equipped you for the sacred work of nurturing the children in your life. Trust that God made the right choice.

We are excited to walk this road together and to see all God will do in and through the children and families of St. Paul in 2026!

Abigail Shaw
Children's Ministry Director
learningtree@stpaulmuskogee.com



CHILDREN'S BACKPACK FOOD MINISTRY



Packing food bags
assembly line style.

10:00 a.m. Wednesdays
January 14 & 28



Church Offices
Closed on
Monday, Jan. 19

Children ages 2-4 years old.

The Learning Tree



Mon-Wed-Fri from 9AM-2PM



Children's
Sunday
School
10:00 a.m.



Youth Group
6:00 p.m.
Wednesdays
6-12 Grade students
meets every week!

Rehearsals 7PM - Wednesdays



10:00 a.m. Thursdays
Ladies Handbell
Choir Rehearsals

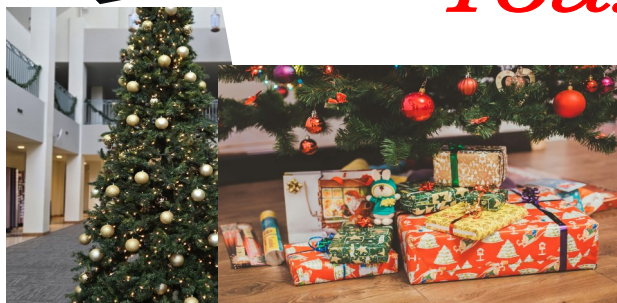


Some of the 8:45 a.m. Worship participants.
See you in 2026 Praising the Lord together!

ANGEL TREE



*Thank
You!!*



Together we gave gifts
to over 63 children who
may not have had
a Christmas otherwise.

HOPE BLOOD DRIVE

Sunday, January 11
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.



Our
Blood
Institute

877-340-8777 • obi.org
Photo ID required. *while supplies last.



Sunday, January 11
Children's & Youth Department
Cookies & punch
"THANK YOU"
Reception



Birthdays

1 Walker Kanny	15 Chris Garrison
3 Joe Foster	15 Earl VanHauen
3 Lillian VanHauen	17 Shannon Evans
5 Tracey Szabo	17 Jamie Heymans
6 Ann Davis	19 Tiffany Egdorf
6 Bonnie Dunkelberger	22 Michael Morrison
7 Darla Dunham	23 Ben Robinson
8 Michele Seymour	25 Renee McMillin
10 Julie Elgin	26 Joanne Nilsson
11 Johnny Broome	29 Katey Sherrick
11 Toni Monroe	30 Jo Gibbs
12 Cleon McClain	31 Pam Johnson



Anniversaries

1/10	Ben & Amber Hilfiger
1/11	Ed & Pam Johnson
1/14	Sam & Pennie Bennett
1/24	Jeffery Church & Harriet Sullivan
1/27	Martin & Ineta Bebb
1/31	David & Krinna Hix

Altar Flowers

to the glory of God

- Jan. 4** **Weldon & Barbara Key**, in memory of Barbara's parents, Armel & Louise Walden.
- Jan. 11** **Charlene Pruden**, in loving memory of Booker Pruden.
- Jan. 18** **Janey Boydston**, in memory of Max Boydston.
- Jan. 25** **April Felts**, in honor of her mother, Dorris Matlock.

USHER MINISTRY

8:45 a.m. Ushers

- 1st Sun.:** Jim Baker, Mark Unger
- 2nd Sun.:** Marilyn Gilder, Jo Gibbs
- 3rd Sun.:** Omar Reed, Kermit Lyday
- 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.:** Christina Booher
- 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: Sydney Daniels