



THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

JANUARY 2026

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EPIPHANEIA

Welcome to the Year of our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six. We have recently passed through the seasons of Advent (a time of anticipation and longing) and Christmas (the entry of God in the world as a baby) and we now enter the season of Epiphany. The word Epiphany comes from the Greek word “*epiphaneia*” which means appearance or manifestation. During the six weeks of this season, the Gospel readings will focus on how God reveals Jesus to the world, first to the wise men and then in ever expanding circles to others. As this is Lectionary Year A, we'll see this story primarily through the eyes of the Evangelist Matthew, a writer who was firmly rooted in Jewish scripture and culture.

This season is the opportunity for each of us to relive this revealing again and consider what it means to us today. One of the interesting aspects of our journey through this season of Epiphany is the variety of preachers from whom you will be hearing. We have five priests who will be with us through Epiphany and Lent and the Reverend Sarah Weedon will be with us during all the major services during Holy Week.

In the absence of a priest, I will be available for any of your pastoral care needs. Always feel free to call or email me at any time. However, if you would feel more comfortable with a priest, let me know and I will make arrangements with one of the priests in the convocation.

– Deacon Jim Jenkins



Lessons and Carols on December 21st

Vestry nominations

Linda Candlish and Ian Brandau are rotating off Vestry as of the Annual Meeting at noon on January 25. Doug Hippenstiel has agreed to serve on Vestry, and other nominations will be accepted during the Annual Meeting if another person rises to the occasion. The meeting will be in-person and on Zoom. A light lunch will be served.

Cookies by the Pound

Thanks to the cookie bakers and cookie munchers, we raised \$950 in the cookie sale. We had 40 trays of cookies, with 37 different kinds. This year was an easy set up and take down, with 6 cookies left unclaimed. Thank you everyone!



Exciting Christian education program coming in February

In February, Christian Education will begin offering the **Alpha Course**. An introductory session will be held on **Sunday evening, February 1, at 6 p.m.**, with pizza, for anyone interested in learning more about the program.

The course will run from **February 15 through the first week of May**, following our usual schedule of **Sunday evenings and Monday mornings**. One "weekend retreat" at St. Paul's is planned for Friday evening and Saturday morning, **March 27 and 28**.

Alpha explores the basics of our faith. It is wide ranging and involves both videos and discussions. This is a great opportunity for both someone who has participated in Christian education for years, as well as someone new to the faith. Susie Vollmer has experience leading this program and will be leading our sessions.

'Noisy' Collection

In January, the Noisy Collection at St. Paul's will go to the Columbia-Montour Agency on Aging. If you do not have the opportunity to place your coins in the collection plate during Sunday services at the church, you may send a check and write "CMAA" on the memo line.

THE EPISCOPAL MESSENGER

A newsletter for the parish family of

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Bloomsburg

Please send articles and other correspondence to

Doug Hippenstiel * Dch17846@gmail.com

Kids' Sunday School

Along with learning about the Christmas story, the Kids' Sunday School class spent November and December making Christmas ornaments. Some ornaments went home to share with families, while others were given to the men at Orangeville Manor. Because the men were too ill to attend St. Paul's Christmas celebration, the ornaments were mailed instead.

Theresa, the director at Orangeville Manor, shared photos of the ornaments on their tree and sent this message in response:

"We received the kids' tree ornaments. They are so precious. They truly made our tree complete. So sweet that they were thinking of our guys."

These are wonderful children who gather downstairs for Kids' Sunday School each month. Each one is bright, engaged, and always ready to help a classmate or jump in to clean up. They truly amaze me! St. Paul's is blessed to have such a thoughtful and caring group of young people.

Kids' Sunday School is for school-aged children and meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month during the 10:30 service.

—Susie Vollmer

January Baptismal Birthdays

Victoria Wilcox * John Aaron * Jessica Lowe * Keenan Pugh * Hunter Pugh * Dallas Ann Tyree * Landon Hyatt



Oliver John Sheldon Motyka, son of John and Ginny Motyka, was baptized by Rev. Sarah Wheadon on December 28 during the 10:30 a.m. service. Godparents are Kimberly Clark and Jennifer Flick.



A Time of Transition

Happy New Year to All! We enter 2026 full of hope and expectation as we prepare to begin the process to search for a new priest.

Our Search Committee is comprised of Rachel Bitler, Doug Hippenstiel, Victoria Wilcox, Karen Zekauskas and Katherine Staller. This diverse team will work under the guidance of The Rev. Canon Veronica Donohue Chappell, Canon Missioner of the Northwest Region of the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna. Her experience in congregational development and transition ministry will guide us throughout our discernment.

We will keep the congregation of St. Paul's informed as updates become available. Please hold us in your prayers as we strive to do God's will in our journey to select a new priest for St. Paul's. – *Katherine Staller, Senior Warden*

OOM Dessert Mission

The 2026 dessert mission schedule will begin in February, with sign-up sheets available mid-January. To sign up, or if you have questions, contact Elaine Pongratz: mdmep@ptd.net

Carrying the Light into a New Year

As the calendar turns to a new year, we often find ourselves standing in that quiet space between reflection and renewal. This season, both liturgical and personal, invites us to look back with gratitude and forward with hopeful anticipation.

I continue to have such a deep appreciation for the St. Paul's family. Whether through the faithfulness of our choir, the warmth of the congregation, or the steady spirit of worship that fills our sanctuary, this community continues to be a source of light. Entering my second Christmas and Christmastide with you has only deepened that sense of connection and joy.

As we move into the season after Epiphany, the story continues - not with the grand celebration of Christmas, but with quiet revelations: Jesus' baptism, his healing touch, his call to discipleship, and his message of peace. These Sundays are rich with meaning, filled with signs of the Kingdom breaking through in ordinary moments.

In our music these next few weeks, we will echo those themes: songs of transformation, of light shining in the darkness, and of the good news carried forth in word and sound. The new year naturally brings transitions (some seen, some unseen), and music remains a steadying thread that grounds us in worship, even as we grow and change.

Rehearsals resume on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Upper Parish Hall, and this season is a wonderful time to consider joining the choir. Whether for a few weeks or long-term, your voice matters, and your presence is always welcome as we prepare new and familiar anthems for the weeks to come.

Let us sing boldly and faithfully in this new year, remembering that through music, we not only reflect the light of Christ: we carry it. – *Dr. Alan Hack, Music Director*

St. Paul's Altar Flowers

If you would like to provide altar flowers for a special occasion, please send your request to Patty Creasy at the Church Office (Post Office Box 764). Flowers for one Sunday cost \$45, plus \$6 for delivery, but you are welcome to contribute whatever you can.

Please make checks payable to St. Paul's Episcopal Church and mail to P.O. Box 764, Bloomsburg, PA 17815. Please include a note with the following information:

- The Sunday you would like to provide the flowers.
- Notation: The Altar Flowers are given by _____ in loving memory of _____, or in thanksgiving for _____.
- Your name and contact information (phone number, email address, etc.)

Vestry Report for December

Senior Warden's Report

- The letter from the Senior Warden to Bishop Scanlan was sent on December 1st to officially notify her of Allison's resignation and of our desire to begin the search for a new priest. Canon Veronica Chappell will be in touch with next steps.
- As a reminder, the members of the Search Committee are Rachel Bitler, Doug Hippenstiel, Katherine Staller, Victoria Wilcox and Karen Zekauskas.
- Katherine will begin to organize Tuesday evening gatherings sometime in January. We will meet in the lower parish hall and follow the same format that Russell started with a main dish being provided and attendees bringing a side dish and beverage. Or, we might make it a true potluck gathering depending on feedback from attendees. This is a wonderful opportunity to come together for food and fellowship.
- No information is available yet about projected cost of a bishop directed search, but we don't need to do a new Parish Profile. We need to make sure the website is robust.

Deacon's report

Supply clergy is in good shape through Easter. Rev. Sarah Weedon will cover Holy

Week. Jim will cover for services that do not require a eucharist. Jim submitted estimated cost for supply clergy to the Treasurer, with the assumption of doing Morning Prayer once a month during the search.

Treasurer's Report

- No comments or questions on balance sheet
- Budget report: Income lines are strong overall
- Investments: Parking Lot principal is at our articulated goal of \$400,000. We then had to take out monies in December for a property bill.
- 2026 Budget
 - Balanced budget
 - Received contributions from parishioner to help defray extra gardening costs
 - Rental house transfer is being reduced to allow for some buildup of funds in Lowe house account to increase margin so we can cover unexpected expenses.
 - Verified COLA at 3%
 - Parish Life line item includes some monies for Parish dinners on Tuesday night.
 - We may save up to 15% on utilities with the Rectory being closed.
 - We will incur an expense for cleaning out the Rectory.
 - Stewardship numbers: To date, 32 pledge renewals

- Worship—clergy supply estimate is \$24,075
- Will have fire alarm panel and fire alarms expenses that may need to be factored into the budget
- \$1,000 is in advertising budget for anticipated costs of rector search.
- Assistant Treasurer: Still asking for a parishioner to step up. Victoria will do it, hopefully on a temporary basis.
- Fair Share commitment resolution was passed.

Old Business

Discussed Vestry Nominating committee. Have only one person agreeing to be on Vestry, but have two open slots

New Business

- Annual Meeting Resolution for Hybrid meeting was discussed and passed.
- Parochial report is due in March 2026. Katherine will complete it with help of Dennis and Jim.

January Lectionary

1/11 – First Sunday after the Epiphany

- [Isaiah 42:1-9](#)
- [Acts 10:34-43](#)
- [Matthew 3:13-17](#)
- [Psalm 29](#)

1/18 – Second Sunday after the Epiphany

- [Isaiah 49:1-7](#)
- [1 Corinthians 1:1-9](#)
- [John 1:29-42](#)
- [Psalm 40:1-12](#)

1/19 – Confession of St. Peter, Apostle

- [Acts 4: 8-13](#)
- [1 Peter 5:1-4](#)
- [Matthew 16:13-19](#)
- [Psalm 23](#)

1/25 – Third Sunday after the Epiphany

- [Isaiah 9:1-4](#)
- [1 Corinthians 1:10-18](#)
- [Matthew 4:12-23](#)
- [Psalm 27:1, 5-13](#)

1/26 – Conversion of St. Paul, Apostle

- [Acts 26:9-21](#)
- [Galatians 1:11-24](#)
- [Matthew 10:16-22](#)
- [Psalm 67](#)

In Our Prayers

O God of all mercy, look with favor on your servants who are in sickness, danger, sorrow or any other kind of trouble, especially:

Aiden * Alan * Alexis * Allison * Amber*
Andrew * Becky * Beth * Betsy * Bob *
Bryan * Carol * Cathy * Christina * Cindy
* Connor * Dan * Devon * Dorothy *
Elaine * Ellen and her family * Faisal *
Frankie * Gene * Harrison * Helena *
Jackie * Janet * Jay * Jerry * Jesse * Jill *
Jim * Joanne * Joe * John * Jon * Josh *
Julie * Kiki * Kim * Krista * Laurie *
Leslie * Ling * Luann * Lynn * Maria *
Mariann * Marie * Michelle * Mike * Patti
* Paul * Richard * Rick * Rose * Russ *
Ruth * Scott * Sean * Simuel * Steve *
Tasha * Tim * Victoria * Vinny * William *
Willie

*Give them, we pray, courage and hope,
and a happy issue from all their
afflictions, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

(The complete written prayer list will be printed in the newsletter and in the weekly "Happenings." However, only those names requested on Sunday morning in-person or by Zoom will be read during the service. PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN SOMEONE'S NAME CAN BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST.)

Parish Leadership

The Rev. Jim Jenkins, Deacon
Telephone: 541-306-1215
jim-jenkins@comcast.net

Dr. Alan Hack, Music Director
Hack0621@gmail.com

Patty Creasy, Church Secretary
Telephone: 570-594-4518
saintpaulsbloom@gmail.com

Officers

Katherine Staller, Senior Warden
kesbb@windstream.net

Valerie Evert, Junior Warden
Valerie17815@gmail.com

Victoria Wilcox, Secretary
Victoriawilcox7@gmail.com

Dennis MacMahon, Treasurer
Denmac733@gmail.com

Other Vestry Members

Rachel Bitler
rbitler@ptd.net

Ian Brandau
ianclub@ptd.net

Linda Candlish
lacandlish@gmail.com







St. Paul's sponsored one tree at Treefest 2025. It was decorated by Columbia County Family Center. As with all of the Treefest trees, our tree was donated to a family who would not have any Christmas



without our help. Treefest is an annual fundraising special event that benefits BTE. Local tree growers donate their best trees, local businesses, families and not for profit

organizations sponsor the trees, and organizations (ie: Cub Scout packs, school classes, garden clubs, etc.) decorate the trees. Treefest is open to the public for two weekends. At the end of Treefest, the trees are donated to families, any toys left under the trees are donated to Toys for Tots, and any food left under the trees is donated to the Bloomsburg Food Cupboard.





January 4 - February 15

Panther Packs Challenge XII

For the 12th annual Panther Packs challenge our goal is **60 actual or virtual** bags of kid-friendly food for BFC. It has been another rough year for the Bloomsburg Food Cupboard. St. Paul's annual Panther Pack Challenge provides a much-needed boost in BFC's supply of kid-friendly foods. We work hard to keep shortages from cutting into Panther Packs, a project that is so important to the well-being of the children in our community. Here's how you can help:

1. Fill-a-Bag with kid-friendly food or add items to "shared bags".
2. Use donation envelopes to make a monetary donation.
\$10 donation = 1 virtual bag of food.

According to St. Paul's Panther Pack volunteers, the food items that will best support the 2026 program include:

- macaroni & cheese (boxes/cups)
- 16 oz cans ravioli with meat & Spaghetti O's with meatballs
- 16 oz. jars of peanut butter
- cold cereal: 8 oz – 12 oz boxes or individual servings
- hot cereal: individual cups/boxes of individual packets
- Chicken noodle or tomato soup; ramen noodles
- Cracker packs/granola/breakfast bars/microwave popcorn
- Canned tuna, fruit/applesauce cups, Jello/pudding cups, hot chocolate pouches

For monetary donations, checks should be written to St. Paul's with **Panther Packs** on the memo line. Donation envelopes are on the "example" table in the foyer.

The challenge runs from January 4– February 15
Let's keep our 11-year winning streak going!

The best laid plans....OOM Christmas Social: On Friday, December 12, we were notified that many residents at Orangeville Manor had bronchitis or other respiratory illnesses; one had been hospitalized. Theresa (CEO) knew that very few of the men would be able to attend. Outreach did not want to put the congregation at risk. We delivered the food and gifts to the Manor on Saturday and Sunday. We are grateful to everyone who signed up to help and to all of the dessert-makers! We had a nice selection of treats!

While it was disappointing, it did serve to open a new conversation: at least four members of the congregation have suggested holding a social for OOM in the summer. After the holidays we will approach OOM with the possibility of a "Christmas in July" event. Additional suggestions and input from the congregation is welcome!

Supporting the BU Women's Basketball Team in 2026

Wednesday, January 7	5:30 pm	Shippensburg University
Thursday, January 15	5:30 pm	West Chester University
Wednesday, January 21	5:30 pm	Mansfield University
Thursday, January 29	5:30 pm	Shepherd University
Wednesday, February 4	5:30 pm	East Stroudsburg University
Saturday, February 14	1:00 pm	Kutztown University
Saturday, February 21	1:00 pm	Millersville University
Wednesday, February 25	5:30 pm	Lock Haven University

Home games are played in the Nelson Field House on the upper campus. From the traffic light on Lightstreet Road, the stadium is a left (heading east) or right (heading west) turn onto Country Club Road and straight up the hill.

Thank you!

Dear Parishioners,

Having received your responses to the Stewardship Campaign, I write with awe and quiet gratitude. On behalf of Vestry and our life together, thank you for your generous outpouring of support. Thank you, also, for your prayers, attention to the responsibility of stewardship, and timeliness in responding.

I am extremely happy to report that your pledges of time, effort, spiritual devotion, and financial contributions created the path for St. Paul's to move into 2026 with a balanced budget. In 2026, we can not only keep the lights on, but we have the capacity to respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit, to examine again our identity as we call a new priest, and to continue strengthening our purposes of service and spiritual growth.

For more details regarding our growth in income for 2026 and how your gifts are being used, please read the forthcoming *Annual Report* and bring your questions and ideas to the Annual Meeting. Also, note that the previously announced *Feedback Request* will soon be available both at the church and via email. We very much want your input!

Again, please receive the joyous gratitude for your generosity and for abundantly protecting and fostering our corporate life in Christ.

During this morning's prayers, I received an image of a star, like the Christmas star, shining in the night sky above our beautiful church. We are blessed.

In service,

Linda Candlish, Stewardship Chair

(570) 764-3128