

Epistle



Saint Paul
Methodist Church

ADVENT 2023

Welcome to the Saint Paul Epistle

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Saint Paul Goldsboro



Church Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday

9 AM -12 PM

1 PM- 5 PM

Friday

9 AM - 12 PM



A Message From Our Senior Minister Rev. James H. Harry

It is believed that Christmas gift-giving didn't begin until around 336 AD. Before the fourth century, Christmas wasn't as celebrated a Christian holiday as Easter. Somewhere around 336 AD, December 25th became associated with the celebration of Christmas and two factors lent themselves to gift giving. The first, of course, was the recognition of the gifts of the Magi [Wise Men] from the east who visited Jesus and presented him with gifts. The second was associated with a fourth-century bishop in modern-day Turkey who secretly bestowed gifts on needy people around the time the Church began to celebrate Christmas. His name? Saint Nicholas.

Today, giving gifts is a staple in families and among friends at Christmas. Aside from the commercialization and materialism of lavish gift-giving, many people put a lot of thought and energy and extend good wishes, cheer, joy, and love through the giving of a heart-felt gift to people we love. This is the same at Saint Paul Methodist Church as we look forward to sharing good gifts to others out of the abundance of our communal life together. These gifts come from the generosity of the people of Saint Paul through both the connectional giving and mission budgets which all of you contribute to through your tithes and offerings.

Through our denominational connectional giving, we share out of our abundance and support the ministries and infrastructure of the larger Church. Previously called the "apportionment" in the UMC, the vision for connectional giving in the GMC is an invitation for local churches to share abundantly and generously out of their own abundance. The hope for the GMC Connectional Missions and Ministry giving (no longer called apportionment) is that each local church chooses where their missional monies go both locally and abroad.

I am excited to share how our gift-giving this Christmas will benefit the lives of others.

Right here in Goldsboro, we will be giving Christmas gifts to the following local ministries and charities to assist them in their annual programs and ministries.

Protestant Preschool:	\$1,000.00
WAGES Senior Companion Program:	\$2,000.00
Daniels Chapel Ministry to support Ukraine refugee family:	\$2,500.00
Goldsboro Soup Kitchen:	\$5,000.00
Wayne County Recovery Initiative: {Refurbishment of Green Acres for AA}	\$5,000.00
Methodist Home for Children	\$5,000.00 {Combined Ministry Gift}
Methodist Women:	\$1,000.00
Methodist Men:	\$2,500.00
Missions/Outreach:	\$1,500.00

In addition to this local Christmas gift-giving, Saint Paul has continued its international missional focus through the ZOE Orphan Empowerment Ministry by supporting four Working Groups. A Working Group comprises anywhere between 25-30 children per group who are becoming self-sufficient and moving out of poverty. Currently, we financially support four Working Groups [2 in Kenya and 2 in India]. That is over 100 children [not including the dependent siblings they parent] that you are directly supporting to raise out of poverty, into self-sufficiency, and providing them with the opportunity to thrive where they never would have had the chance to do so.

ZOE Orphan Empowerment Ministry:	\$34,000.00
Additional Annual GMC Connectional Missions and Ministry Giving:	\$34,000.00

From Our Senior Minister

(continued)

Moreover, we have three additional opportunities to give during Advent.

1. Angel Tree: The Angel Tree in the Narthex allows you to give a Christmas gift to the Salvation Army of Goldsboro which will provide presents for 40 families at Christmas.
2. Congregations 4 Children Tree: The C4C Tree in the Narthex allows you to give a Christmas gift to the teachers and staff at Carver Heights Elementary School.
3. 2023 Advent Coin Boxes: The 2023 Advent Coin offerings this year will go to a new ministry we are beginning to support called Project Agape. Project Agape works directly with Christians in the country of Armenia who are suffering persecution for their Christianity. Armenia is credited as the first nation in the world to adopt Christianity as its religion, believed to have been under the evangelism of the Apostle Bartholomew at the end of the first century. Christians there are now being economically and physically persecuted for their faith and face extreme poverty. Project Agape is seeking to secure enough money to purchase comforters/blankets for the winter at \$20.00 per comforter/blanket set. Our normal Advent coin offering is \$20.00 per family, and we hope to be able to send enough money for Project Agape to provide 100 comforters to our Armenian Christian brothers and sisters.

I think everyone enjoys receiving gifts. Christmas time is an especially wonderful time to give and receive gifts. It reminds us of the generosity of spirit and the lavish gift-giving of God in giving us his only Son, Jesus, to become the gift of love for the world. As I have gotten older, I have found I enjoy giving gifts more than I enjoy receiving gifts. I don't know whether that is particularly true of you or not. But, as we prepare to put these aforementioned Christmas gifts into the stockings of these local and international ministries, I believe that like the Church in 336 AD, we are honoring the spirit of Christmas by honoring the gift of the baby born in Bethlehem from whom comes every good gift under heaven.

Merry Christmas!



What's Been Happening At Saint Paul?

140th Anniversary Worship Celebration



WORSHIP | GROW | SERVE

FAITH Commitment Campaign



Methodist Men Present Financial Gift to Methodist Home For Children



Titus 2 Women's Ministry



All Saints Sunday



What's Been Happening At Saint Paul?

Methodist Women Faith, Hope, & Charity Make Manger Scene Gifts



Methodist Women's Brunch



Faith, Hope, & Charity Deck the Parlor



WORSHIP | GROW | SERVE

*Kids Learn About
GRATITUDE*



Kids Deck Saint Paul



What's Been Happening At Saint Paul?

Youth Scavenger Hunt



Youth Concert Night



WORSHIP | GROW | SERVE

Youth Thanksgiving Mission Meal Packing & Delivery



From Pastor Rick Winders



This Christmas Season is now upon us, and I hope everyone is looking forward to celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

During this Christmas season, more than likely, we will participate in Holiday traditions. It may be baking Christmas cookies the weekend before Christmas Day or a shared meal with your family. Now that I have a family, one of our traditions is to drive around with my sister, her husband, my niece, her husband, and their kids and look at Christmas lights. Every family has their Christmas Holiday Traditions, usually passed down from family to family through the generations. These traditions typically guide our Christmas Holiday, where we are going, the activities we participate in, and even what we eat.

Here is something else that traditions can do: they can shape who we are as a person. These traditions also can shape our faith. Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines traditions as "the handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction."

Can Christmas traditions shape the faith of your children and teens?

One tradition that was a part of my family's Christmas season happened every Christmas Eve Night. My father would read the Christmas story to my sisters and me. I am not talking about the story with visions of sugarplums, a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer but the real Christmas story. The Christmas

***Today in the
town of David
a Savior has
been born to
you; he is the
Messiah, the
Lord.***

- Luke 2:11 -

Youth@SaintPaul Christmas Dinner



story that we find in the Gospel of Luke where shepherds are told by the Angels, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Hearing my father tell me this true story year after year helped shape my faith. Hearing my father tell me this true story year after year reminded me that the most important thing about Christmas is JESUS!!

God doesn't tell us we can't bake Christmas cookies, have shared family meals, or look at Christmas lights, but what he wants us to do is to remember that a Savior was born, a savior who takes away the sins of the world. This Advent season let's take time to shape our children's and youth's faith by making Jesus the most important thing about Christmas.

Pastor Rick Winders
Associate Minister

From Our CHILDREN'S Ministry



Dear Saint Paul Church Family,

I can't believe that it is already December! It's been an incredible year filled with blessings and impact. As we approach the end of 2023 and step into 2024 we have so much to look forward to.

Over the past year our Children's Committee has been hard at work making important updates to the Children's Education building. We've allocated a significant portion of our resources to enhance our "preteen" room, recognizing the transition from childhood to youth is an important one. Our goal is to meet our preteens where they are ensuring their experience in Sunday school and Pathfinders aligns with their age and needs.

We've also been active in the community, spreading love through various activities. We've delivered Valentine's Day cards to our widows and to nursing homes, reminding them that they are heard, seen and loved. Our Easter program focused on the true meaning of Easter, emphasizing Jesus's victory over death and the promise of eternal life.

Our Vacation Bible School was a resounding success, teaching our children how to follow Jesus everywhere they go. We took a short break over the summer and returned with a kickoff event in September. Since then, we've had Sunday school and introduced the new Sunday evening program, Pathfinders. Our fall festival was a joyous occasion of fellowship, where we learned to prioritize following Jesus in our lives. Additionally, we celebrated Saint Paul's 140th anniversary with great excitement, memories, and some amazing food!

Looking ahead, our children are currently immersed in preparing for the Christmas pageant. This year's Christmas cantata will be approximately 30 minutes long, where we'll sing and narrate the beautiful story of Jesus's birth. Following the pageant, we will gather for a special birthday-themed dinner in Winslow Hall, featuring a touching video about the birth of Jesus. Moreover, we will be collecting gifts for a family we are supporting this holiday season.

In July, we received a heartfelt letter from a gentleman whose parents were helped by Saint Paul over 40 years ago. He enclosed a generous check for \$1000 along with a touching testimony of



how our act of kindness profoundly impacted his family. Their lives were transformed during a challenging time when they faced financial hardship.

Saint Paul's compassionate gesture, arriving with a suburban filled with toys and enough food "to feed an army," sowed a seed of kindness that continues to bear fruit. After numerous heartfelt discussions, our Children's Committee decided to pay it forward. We've chosen to bless another family in need, just as we were blessed four decades ago. We'll be providing gifts for a family of seven and presenting them with the \$1000 check. We hope and pray that this act of kindness will have a lasting impact on their lives, just as it did for the gentleman who reached out to us.



As we move forward, we have many exciting plans for our children in the coming year. Please join us in prayer, asking for guidance and blessings as we continue to nurture and support our children, planting seeds of faith and helping them make connections in their spiritual journey.



Thank you for being a part of our Saint Paul Church family and may God's love continue to shine through all that we do.

Mary Catherine Kelley
Director of Children's Ministry

From Our *MUSIC* Ministry



Dear Church Family,

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I hope each of you experienced moments of joy and warmth surrounded by loved ones. As we transition into the Advent season, I'm excited to share some updates about the ministry happening within music at Saint Paul.

Lessons Ministry

Since we've launched the new Lessons Ministry many of you have jumped at the opportunity to grow musically at Saint Paul! There are currently four students enrolled in lessons, from piano and organ to voice. Our students are exploring a variety of music, from classical piano literature by Chopin to the soul-stirring Southern Spirituals, and even Latin solo works like Ave Maria. Our students are taking advantage of this program to explore a diverse range of musical styles.

I'm excited about this strong start to music education at Saint Paul and look forward each week to working with our students.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining this program, please do not hesitate to contact us. More information can be found on our website.

Cantata Choir

Our Cantata Choir is a new ensemble at Saint Paul, offering a flexible choral experience for those with busy schedules. It requires a 45-minute-a-week commitment for rehearsal and 1 day in December. Rehearsals are on Wednesday nights from 6:30 PM to 7:15 PM. If you are passionate about singing and want to be a part of our celebration of Christ's birth, contact me directly, or simply walk into the choir room on a Wednesday night! I hope to see some of you soon.

Children's Christmas Pageant

Pathfinders have been having a blast on Sunday afternoons and have impressed me with their energy and love for music. We have been working together on a Christmas program featuring all age groups of the program from toddlers to fifth grade. These kids are pouring their hearts and souls into preparing a magical Christmas experience for you!

Handbell Choir

Our Handbell Choir has been diligently rehearsing and preparing for the Christmas season. We've been rehearsing not only music for the Cantata but also special music for the Advent season. We look forward to sharing these pieces with you!

Let us come together in joy and gratitude for the blessings that surround us throughout the festive season. I am immensely grateful for the support of our church family and look forward to creating more music and memories together.

Holton Johnson
Music Director



Saint Paul METHODIST WOMEN

Methodist Women Library

The Saint Paul Methodist Women are so excited to have a new home for our library – in the hall off of the Narthex. Please stop by and find a book to read for you or your child. We have some wonderful ones available for your use.



****NEW** Book Club**

The Saint Paul Methodist Women are starting a Book Club and we hope you will join us. Our first meeting will be Tuesday, January 9, at 12:00 noon, at The Laughing Owl. We have chosen the book, "Praying for Strangers", by River Jordan. Several copies will be available or you can order your own copy from Amazon. Please plan to join us.

Methodist Women Circles

- ACTS Circle: meets the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm upstairs at Hinnant Family Dentistry
- Faith, Hope, & Charity Circle: meets the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30am in the Saint Paul Parlor
- Aldersgate Circle: meets the first Tuesday of the month at 11am in the Saint Paul JP Edwards Classroom
- Unity Circle: meets the second Tuesday of the month at 11am in the Saint Paul JP Edwards Classroom

Welcome To Saint Paul – New Memembers

Amanda Jo Natividad & Family

On October 22, 2023 we welcomed Amanda Jo Natividad and her three children, Hailie Jo, Averie, and Lilliana, to membership in the Saint Paul family as they transferred from Jarvis Memorial in Greenville, NC.



Celebration of Life

Abdula Armani Shabzz

On October 12, 2023, as the road of life grew rough, God called Abdula Armani Shabzz back to His side.

Abdula Armani Shabzz, born on November 24, 1949, to the late Martha B. Winn and Henry Daniel Brinson of Rose Hill, North Carolina.

He found solace and purpose in his unwavering faith as a devoted member of Saint Paul Methodist Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

With a warm and welcoming spirit, Abdula left an indelible mark on the lives he touched. Despite facing health challenges, he handled them with unwavering grace and determination, serving as an inspiration to all who knew him.

Abdula held family and friends at the center of his heart, emphasizing the importance of these cherished bonds. His dedication to maintaining connections through heartfelt phone calls transcended distances, reinforcing the enduring significance of family ties.

He was preceded in death by his brothers: Everette Brinson, James Brinson, and John Brinson, along with his sisters Doris Robinson and Annie Stevens.

Abdula was a devoted brother, leaving behind two sisters, Shirley Smith, and Ruby Bass (John), along with a multitude of nieces, nephews, family members, and friends.

While he may no longer be with us in person, the impact he made on our lives endures, serving as a constant reminder of the love and wisdom he shared.



Celebration of Life

Clarence Johnson "Buddy" Weeks, Jr.

Clarence Johnson Weeks, Jr., better known as "Buddy", 82, passed away on December 7, 2023 at home with his family by his side. Buddy was born in Edgecombe County on December 30, 1940 to the late Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Johnson Weeks of Tarboro. Buddy is survived by his wife Isabelle Partin Weeks; a daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth Weeks Hott and Justin of New Bern; a son and daughter-in-law, Robert Todd Weeks and Missy of Sugar Hill, Georgia. In addition, Buddy is survived by four grandchildren: Mary McCullen Hott, Elizabeth McCain Hott, and Hudson Thomas Hott of New Bern; and Ava Noel Weeks of Sugar Hill, Georgia. He is also survived by his one sister Mary Alice Weeks Fountain of Davison, N.C., and several nieces and nephews.

Buddy graduated from the School of Education at East Carolina University. After graduation, Buddy taught middle school math and science in Virginia and North Carolina for over 30 years. His students always described him as a caring teacher, who was always willing to help them be successful in school. In addition, Buddy was a Charter member of the Sugarfoot Shag Club of Goldsboro, and enjoyed socializing and dancing with his wife and shag friends. Buddy had a lifelong love of Carolina beach music, and could always be found listening to his favorite beach music radio shows every weekend.

Buddy was a long-time member of Saint Paul Methodist Church in Goldsboro. He loved God and shared that love with others. In his final days, he knew without a doubt that he was going home to be with his Lord.

Buddy will be remembered for his sweet smile and friendly disposition by many students, fellow educators, friends, and family. He loved people

and found such joy in being surrounded by family and friends. He especially loved cutting up and joking with his grandchildren. Special to his heart was

his beloved wife and best friend Isabelle who he shared 45 years with in their home in Goldsboro. Buddy loved his children and grandchildren and was so proud of each of them. He was always happy and excited when they could all be together, and cherished every moment that he spent with his loving family.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given in Buddy's memory to Saint Paul Methodist Church, 204 E Chestnut St, Goldsboro, NC 27530 or to 3HC Hospice, 2402 Wayne Memorial Drive, Goldsboro, NC 27534.

The family will receive friends on Monday December 11, 2023 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. at Saint Paul Methodist Church followed by a service to celebrate Buddy's life at 2:00 p.m. in the sanctuary with Rev. James H. Harry presiding. Interment will follow at Willowdale Cemetery in Goldsboro.



Saint Paul Methodist Church

2024 FAITH Commitment to God at Saint Paul Methodist Church



NEXT STEP IN FAITH



F **FOCUS**

Jeremiah 29:13

Strengthen my personal relationship with God.



A **ATTENDANCE**

Hebrews 10:24-25

Be present at Saint Paul whenever possible



I **INTERCESSION**

1 Timothy 2:1-2

Pray for our church, pastors, and leaders.



T **TITHES**

2 Corinthians 9:7

Give back to God from His financial blessings.



H **HELP**

1 Peter 4:10-11

Volunteer in areas needed within Saint Paul ministries.



SAINT PAUL KIDS PRESENTS

The Children's Christmas Pageant

Join us as our Saint Paul Kids
retell the Christmas Story.

DECEMBER 17 @ 4PM

Followed by a Special Reception in Winslow Hall



Saint Paul
Methodist Church

Worship • Grow • Serve

c4c Christmas Tree

THE CONGREGATIONS 4 CHILDREN CHRISTMAS TREE WILL BE IN THE NARTHEX THROUGHOUT ADVENT. WE CAN THANK THE TEACHERS AND STAFF AT CARVER HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR THEIR DILIGENT WORK WITH THE CHILDREN BY TAKING A TAG OFF THE CHRISTMAS TREE, REPLACE IT WITH AN ORNAMENT FROM THE BOWL NEXT TO THE TREE, AND BUY A \$10.00 GIFT CARD FROM ANY STORE OF YOUR CHOICE (STARBUCKS, MCDONALDS, TARGET, ETC.). BRING THE GIFT CARD BACK TO CHURCH AND PLACE IT IN THE GIFT BOX NEXT TO THE TREE. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS GIFT, IT IS SO APPRECIATED!

Angel Tree

We have 40 Angels this year!
 The Angel Tree is in the Saint Paul Narthex and the Angels are ready to go home with you! All Angels and donations need to be turned into The Salvation Army office located on William St. in Goldsboro by December 8th. Please do NOT wrap any of the gifts and most importantly return the Angel with your gifts! Thank you for blessing the children in our community this Christmas!!



Saint Paul
 Methodist Church



Saint Paul
 Methodist Church

2023 Advent Coin Box

\$0.25	\$0.50	\$0.75	\$1.00					
\$1.25	\$1.50	\$1.75	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.75	\$3.00	\$3.25
\$3.50	\$3.75	\$4.00	\$4.25	\$4.50	\$4.75	\$5.00	\$5.25	\$5.50
\$5.75	\$6.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$6.75	\$7.00	\$7.25	\$7.50	\$7.75
\$8.00	\$8.25	\$8.50	\$8.75	\$9.00	\$9.25	\$9.50		
\$9.75	\$10.00	\$10.25	\$10.50	\$10.75	\$11.00			



Total: \$20.00

Special Advent Mission Offering \$20.00 Advent Coin Box

Collect your quarters and bring as a special offering on Christmas Eve to support Christian refugees who are being persecuted in Armenia through Project Agape.

Saint Paul Advent

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**NOV
30**

5:30 PM: Deck Saint Paul

**DEC
03**

9 AM: First Sunday of Advent with Communion

11 AM: First Sunday of Advent with Communion

**DEC
10**

9 AM: Second Sunday of Advent

11 AM: Second Sunday of Advent

**DEC
17**

9 AM: Non-Traditional Christmas Music Service

11 AM: Third Sunday of Advent Traditional Worship Service

4 PM: Children's Christmas Pageant

**DEC
24**

11 AM (only): Chancel Choir Cantata Service

4 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

7 PM: Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service

**DEC
31**

9 AM: First Sunday after Christmas

11 AM: First Sunday after Christmas

