The Lamplighter
St. Paul's United Methodist Church
West Deptford, NJ
July-August 2026

Vacation Bible School: Jesus Changes the Game!

We hope all our kids and their friends will join us July 26-30 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. for our annual VBS!

Our theme this year is "Twists & Turns," focusing on the Apostle Peter to show kids that following Jesus changes the game. It teaches that even when we stumble, with Jesus it's never "game over."

Theme Verse: "Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths." (Psalm 25:4)

Core Message: Kids learn that life is full of unexpected zigzags, but Jesus guides us through all the ups, downs, and game-changing moments.

Daily Bible Stories: The curriculum centers on the life of Peter, demonstrating that while we may take two steps forward and three steps back, Jesus is always trustworthy and forgiving.

Day 1: Jesus is Holy (Peter sees Jesus' holiness in the miraculous catch of fish)
Day 2: Jesus is Trustworthy (Peter walks on water)
Day 3: Jesus is Forgiving (Peter's denial and restoration)
Day 4: Jesus is Worthy (Peter obeys God rather than men)
Day 5: Jesus is the King (Peter proclaims Jesus as the promised King)

Activity Stations:
Wild Card Crafts: Keepsakes themed around card and board games.
Level Up Music: High-energy worship songs, such as the official "Twists & Turns" theme song.
Ready, Set, Rec: Recreational activities and cooperative games.
Skip Ahead Snacks.

For questions, email StPaulsSundaySchool@gmail.com or call Elaine Luoma or Jen Sattler.

Undies Sundays in August!

Yes, that's right, we're collecting undies again! We collect underwear each year in August to support the ministries of Seeds of Hope in Camden.

Seeds of Hope has three programs to help people. "My Father's Hands" aids those who find themselves on the streets of Camden. "South Jersey AfterCare" helps those recently released from prison re-enter life outside the bars. "She Has A Name" ministers to women struggling in bondage to drugs and prostitution.

Watch for information about exactly what sizes and types of underwear we need this year. And thanks to Chris & Charlie Taylor for heading up this meaningful mission project!

American Red Cross
donate BLOOD
save a life

St Paul's will be hosting the Red Cross Blood Drive on:

- **Friday, July 31, 12-5**
- **Friday, Sept. 25, 12-5**

Our nation's blood supply is fragile. There is a significant need for blood donors! Please consider donating at this or any local drive.

Contact the Red Cross at 800-RED-CROSS or at www.redcross.org to schedule your appointment today!

ALL Prayers:
For our country
For peace and those affected by war
For all those in the world who are hungry
For everyone who is ill
Sharon R undergoing treatment
Logan S praise no more surgeries
Cameron H & family home but needs more tests
Bernice N health & life changes
Chris M another change
Len H oral cancer
Paul had stroke
Family & friends of Carmine
Mary B in Cooper for heart surgery
Drew F hosp needs prayer
Carla B heart cath
Jennifer P infusions for illness
Family & friends of Lucas J young boy drowned
Jessica J stage 4 cancer
Jerry L awaiting test results
Family & friends of Charlie W
Mary Ann grieving brother
Kristin H doing better still needs prayer
Jennifer's friend Kristin health issues
Little Francis surgery tonsils/ adenoids
John liver cancer
Bruce stage 4 prostate cancer
June in FL not doing well
Donna & Beth have very ill mother
Donna S very ill
Tyler S sick
Alice K would love visitors
Family & friends of Bob C
Everyone take care in the heat
Rosie P moved again
David W heart healing needs chemo
Prayer Bible ministry
Peggy W shattered ankle bad fall
Someone downsized at work
Chrissy mastectomy
Amy F praise! No chemo needed!
Xavier critical cond'n hit by baseball
Bob S pain from another spine fracture
Family of Lincoln H, 7-yr-old passed from rare cancer
Dana's aunt medical issues
Daniel 2nd kidney transplant & wife Nicole is donor
Family of Alana C age 5 killed auto acc.
Sandi D lost friend needs comfort
Merry Jeanne M home from hosp
Mark D health challenges
Jose & friends
May Prayer Requests
Truman A health challenges
Jonathan H not well
Mary S knee injury
Sharon H hosp health issues
Rev. Harold G hosp high fever
Jim C health concerns
All of us in a stressful world
Man on life support & family facing decisions
Countries where ebola is emerging
Cheryl A praise and thanks for prayer
S family passing of Don's cousin age 41

Every week: All those in need, unspoken requests, all service men/women, our nation and leaders.

Serving in the Military:
Caitlyn Um, Erynn Plasket, Dan Solano, Chris Yard, Rachel Rachuba, Donna Rachuba, Ed Schwebel, Brandon Howell, Shaina Serrano, Lance Vreeland, PJ Jordan, Destiny Brooke, Manuel Tineo

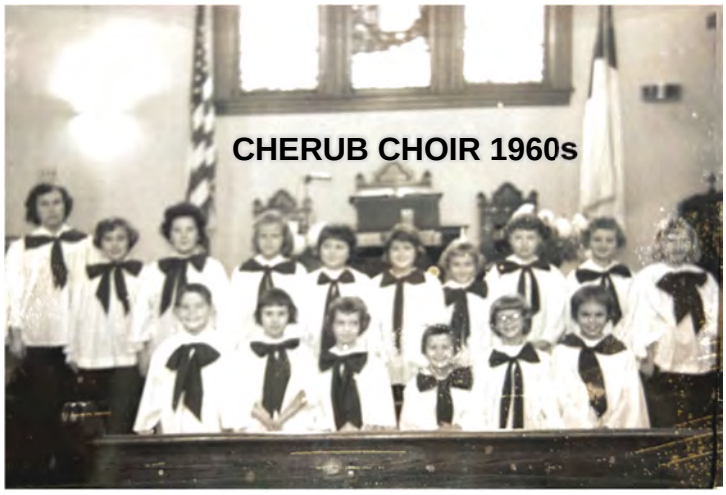
Shut-Ins & Nursing Home Residents:
Sandy D., Bernice N., Rosie P., Gloria L., Mary B., Sue T. Chris M., Alice K., Pat H.

July Birthdays & Anniversaries

1– Dave Fish
1– Don Strock
2– Susan Speakman
2– Peg Purnell
3– Pat Haase
3– Mary Ann Jones
3– Chris & Charlie Taylor
6– Avaleigh Vatseva
9– Gloria Lee
10– Sharon & Jacob Eichel
11– Bob & Marge Rowand
12– Elaine Luoma
14– Hope Hooley
15– Hermine Morgan
15– Peggy Pagano
20– Sharon Rutter
20– Wayne Sierocinski
21– Vikki Gibson
22– Erin Vatseva
23– Jaye Hamel
23– Grant Dechen
23– David & Leisa Keegan
24– Chris Bailey
25– Janice Grassia
25– Nicole Martz
26– Matt & Kim Dechen
26– Rich Gibson
28– John Pagano
28– Logan Sierocinski
31– Bev Betz

August Birthdays & Anniversaries

1– Ken Betz
1– Cameron Kovack
2– Dave Hosier
2– Everett Vatsev
3– Marc Coralluzzo
3– Kaiden Grassia
3– Charlie Taylor
7– Cameron Houghton
8– Jeannette Benne
8– Bernice Nolte
9– Jim & Cheri Clement
13– Leia Eller
14– Luca Rizzuto
16– Gerrie Lynn Dyal
16– DixieLee Leonardo
19– Melissa Thomas
24– Merrilee & William Chappell
26– DixieLee & Jim Leonardo
29– Jack Keegan



THE LAMPLIGHTER

Bimonthly Newsletter of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, PO Box 125, West Deptford, NJ 08086
Pastor: Rev. Dave Delaney
Phone (856) 845-6638
E-mail
pastor@stpaulsthorofare.com

Sunday Morning Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.

Staff
Editor: Trista C Jones
Assistant Editor: Denise Hosier
Regular Contributors: Pastor Dave, Carla Branyan, Mary Ann Jones, Elaine Luoma, Patty Fish, Carol Strock
Production: Trista C Jones

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We Need Everyone's Help!

"So that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way; bearing fruit in every good work." Colossians 1:10

People of faith are called to be action type of people. If you remember what Jesus' brother James wrote in his letter that is part of our Holy Scriptures, you know that he said we are to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers or readers. In Micah the Lord God calls on us to be activists for justice as one of the requirements that God places on us, including showing love and mercy for all others and walking humbly with our God.

Some of the last words of Jesus Christ before He ascended into heaven were an assignment to the faithful … GO INTO THE WORLD and MAKE DISCIPLES and "be my witnesses to the end of the earth!" I am pretty sure that in making that statement, Jesus included South Jersey and the Delaware Valley in his directive that we are to be Jesus' witnesses to the end of the earth.

It seems like yesterday, but it was a few years ago that I issued a challenge to the St. Paul's church family out of my concern for the future of this special church. I stated that we needed to be focused on where this church will be in the year 2035 and what each member of the church can do to ensure that St. Paul's United Methodist Church of West Deptford is still around and is still a vital church for Jesus Christ. I suggested that we needed to have at least 130 people in worship in church every Sunday and frankly, that still holds true. I am still concerned for our future as

I watch the Westville and Colonial Manor churches close their doors this summer.

Our Bishop, Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, at our Annual Conference issued a directive to the clergy … a clear directive with the power of her episcopal office behind it. Every church is required to put into place an action plan for church growth. No more excuses; no more, oh we can't; it was a "you must" order from the Bishop as she reminded all of us that Jesus told us to go into the world and be His witnesses. She said our churches need to start doing that.

Frankly, I won't be St. Paul's pastor when 2035 arrives. My time at this incredible church is quickly fading but I am concerned that even though we have more people in worship than many churches and even though we have some great missional projects … I am worried that we aren't seeing younger people coming to church. We have seen our Sunday School numbers vaporize. I can't help but be concerned as to how many people will be in church on a Sunday morning in 2035.

So I am asking for your help. Your ideas! I have already asked the Leadership Team for their thoughts and ideas. What can or should we consider doing to stop the shrinkage of St. Paul's and to actually grow and build up our membership? What are you willing to do to make it happen? Frankly, no matter who the pastor is, it takes the church family's activism to bring new people in by being invitational and by sharing the story of our church's love for all, missional heart, and joy in worship. Paul writes that we are to live worthy of the Lord and "bear fruit." That fruit is going into the world for Christ.

It is my hope that on a random Sunday in 2035, perhaps on Pentecost, I will come back to visit and worship at St. Paul's and I will discover a packed sanctuary singing the songs of faith while sharing the stories of how the people of this church are still actively showcasing the love of Jesus in the world.

Talk with me about your ideas. Email me at pdatstpauls@gmail.com. No idea is silly, and every idea has possibilities. St. Paul's is recognized right now as a vital, energized, loving, welcoming, joy-filled, and Christ-focused church by people in the Conference and in our community. I hope it remains that way for generations to come!

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

Outreach

Thanks for your Red Bird support!

Thanks to your donations of money, purchase of hoagies, and giving of metal for recycling, we have a Mission Team of seven going to Red Bird July 5-11. This is a major outreach mission and your donations have been greatly appreciated.

Red Bird Missionary Conference in the mountains of Kentucky, renamed now to Central Appalachian Missionary Conference, is one of the poorest areas in the country. Our members will be helping out the residents there by building and improving housing.

Upcoming Mission Projects & Offerings

- July
  - ◊ Our first Sunday offering (July 5) will benefit Native American Awareness Sunday, one of the UMC's Six Special Sundays.
  - ◊ On the third Sunday (July 19) the offering is for Seeds of Hope Ministries in Camden.
- August
  - ◊ Our first Sunday offering (August 2) is Shared Ministries, for the outreach of the United Methodist Church.
  - ◊ Our third Sunday (August 16) we will be supporting St. John of God School for Special Children.

Thank you all for your faithful support of our mission projects. We remain a community of love for all.

New Prayer Bible Ministry

We have started a new ministry at St. Paul's, a Prayer Bible ministry. Anyone who is interested is invited to join in and make a Prayer Bible. Our Bishop stressed the importance of prayer at our Annual Conference, and a Prayer Bible is a tool to help you pray in a way that is deep and meaningful.

TWO INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS took place in June. If you were unable to attend either session and still want to learn about Prayer Bibles, see Denise. We will try to schedule one more introduction.

In the Introductory Session, you will learn the basics. You don't need to bring anything. We will have another couple of guided working sessions in July after members have a chance to purchase what they need to make their own Prayer Bibles.

What Is a Prayer Bible?

A Prayer Bible is a special Bible that is personalized to help you pray. You choose the topics you want to pray over, for example, Faith, Love, Healing, Anxiety, Gratitude, Salvation, Family, and many others. Then you place a tab and highlight scripture to pray over in each topic.

We have lists of scriptures for many different topics, or you can use a Concordance, a Topical Index found in the back of many Bibles, or the Internet to find scriptures that speak to your heart and make you want to pray.

You can also create a specialty Bible for a specific need, for example a Healing Bible or a Cancer Bible with verses to pray over for Healing, Strength and

Endurance, Hope and Eternal Life, Peace over Fear, etc.

How Can I Get Involved?

Just see or email Denise Hosier, or leave a message on her phone or the church phone. She will be running at least one more introductory session and possibly working sessions over the summer. You will learn how to choose your Prayer Bible from among many different translations, sizes, and font sizes. You will receive the lists of topics we have collected and a list of supplies you need, things like tabs, special Bible highlighters or colored pencils.

You can do a whole Prayer Bible using dollar store items, or even without having to purchase anything at all if you don't have a lot of resources. Or you can go crazy and order glitter tabs, washi tape, and special highlighters from Amazon or get them at your favorite store.

So why not join us? Just email Denise today and she will put you on our workshop list. We will try to select workshop times that are convenient for everyone.

We hope you will join us!,

FOCUS: What We Need to Step Up for God

"Prepare ye, the way of the Lord!"

Actor Matthew McConaughey, when asked for his favorite Bible verse, quickly answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone." That verse is found in the fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel where Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God."

In the Broadway musical Godspell there is an uplifting scene of great joy as the cast sings together the call from Isaiah "PREPARE YE THE WAY of THE LORD!" It leads to the question of our personal joy, our personal dedication, and yes, our personal focus for preparing the way of the Lord in and through our lives!

Quite a number of Sundays ago, I asked everyone to actually bring your Bible to church with you on Sundays. Carrying God's Word to worship … such a strange ask, perhaps, but such a strong connection to our God.

I am planning on doing what I called a "Bible Drill" some Sunday … seeing who can find Hosea first. I asked that everyone bring their Bibles with them to hopefully allow a reclamation of our church family's prioritization of God over the world.

There's something about dusting off that old family Bible, touching it, carrying it, and perhaps opening it that absolutely can reenergize our faith.

As I continued to hope that folks would actually listen to their pastor, I started to focus in on our need to focus in on God. Focus in on what we believe. Focus in on church and whether church with its faith community matters any longer.

And then I started reading Matthew's Gospel once again. You know the Sermon on the Mount. The words of Jesus in Matthew 25 that make up my personal theology for living life. Perhaps it was the Holy Spirit, but I felt directed to prepare a sermon series out of Matthew's Gospel entitled.

"FOCUS: Discovering the Clarification We Need to Step Up for God."

This four-part sermon series will include … drum roll please … an urgent request from the pulpit for those in worship to actually go home and do some digging during the week. We will begin in August. I can hear the complaints now … you want us to take our church experience home with us? Really pastor? Homework? It's summer vacation time!

I really am hoping that this sermon series helps all of us to adjust our lives and to regain the focus we need on our faith. Because if you are like me, you have allowed the world's headlines to take away your joy and peace, which God has made readily available to all people of faith.

So get ready, whether you worship in person or online, to FOCUS … FOCUS with sincerity and FOCUS with faith as we will take a brief journey into Matthew's Gospel with some of Paul's words to the Church of Rome tossed in as well!

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

PENTECOST: We had a joyful Pentecost celebration on May 24 with mostly everyone wearing red. Pastor Dave led our service with great joy and enthusiasm and we ended the sermon with a kazoo parade to "When the Saints Go Marching In."

Creating Special Memories for Kids

"Live as children of light!"
Ephesians 5:8

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL … Yes, it's that time of year and I have been thinking of VBS memories these last few days. So many fun moments; so many incredible volunteers; and so many moments when God's love has been shared with hundreds of kids!

I have worn funny wigs, I have clearly worn mismatched clothing, I have been soaked with an outpouring of water celebrating St. Paul's VBS' attendance. I will forever celebrate and treasure my "Three Stooges" moment when all those pies landed on me on St. Paul's front steps, beginning with a blueberry lemon pie from our District Superintendent, the late Rev. Myrna Bethke.

Vacation Bible School time is such a fun time. All of my VBS memories will be forever special to me going all the way back to my days as a child at Randall Memorial Baptist Church.

It is so important for all of us to find ways to create special memories for the next generation of children, many of whom never go to church during the calendar year. Fewer and fewer children are going to Christmas Eve and Easter services as evidenced by the downturn in attendance at our holiday services.

So VBS is THE MOMENT … THE OPPORTUNITY … time to be there for the kids with smiles on our faces and energy in our walk! Perhaps even wearing silly hats or mismatched outfits!

We start VBS week off with Sunday Morning's CHRISTMAS in JULY service. Who are you bringing with you to church that morning? Who are the parents you are calling, texting, emailing, or talking with to ensure that their kids are coming to VBS?

Are you willing to give up some of your precious time for the kids who are coming? Mary Ann and Elaine and Jen cannot do it all by themselves!

The music is awesome … the crafts are cool … recreation is fun and the lessons are life-lasting! I can't wait to celebrate that last night with a sanctuary filled with kids and family members. Will you be there? Volunteer and definitely make those calls!!

Blessings,

Pastor Dave

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES! During our Children's Day celebration on May 17, the Sunday School honored three graduates. Shown at their graduation ceremonies are Mary and Harley Sierocinski and Mikayla Wright. We are so proud of these girls and wish them all the best as they go on to college!

WHAT'S HAPPENING

MOTHER'S DAY was a fantastic celebration! The Guiding Lights class, led by Bev Betz, gave away 15 geraniums, some to all our ladies age 90 and over, and others by random drawing. All the ladies were thrilled to receive these lovely flowers. As part of our tribute, everyone in the congregation was invited to speak about a mom or a woman who had an important effect on their spiritual life. A number of ladies talked about the women who had an impact on them. Finally, we heard a wonderful sermon by Donna Ski and a beautiful musical solo by Carla Branyan.

MANY THANKS to all those that help during worship by reading scriptures, collecting offerings, and acting as greeters. This photo shows just a small number of the many that help.

GRADUATING SENIOR
Mary Sierocinski received a gift from the Sunday School on Children's Day.

Children's Ministry

OUR CHILDREN, although growing smaller in number, are faithful in attending church every week. Many thanks to Dave Fish for his weekly children's sermons and to Don Strock for filling in as needed. We celebrated Children's Day on May 17 with a delicious Family Picnic.

Community Campfire Night July 28

We are planning a fabulous Outreach Event during Vacation Bible School, and everyone is invited!

It will be a Community Campfire Night and will take place on Tuesday, July 28, 2026 from 6:30–8:30 PM. It is focused on VBS families and the broader West Deptford community and will be a casual, relationship-focused, get-to-know-you event. The goal is to create a welcoming environment where families can enjoy food, conversation, and fellowship while also helping St. Paul's learn more about the needs and interests of local families.

The Community Campfire Night will use the church's grassy area along Church Street in front of the parking lot. We are planning three main spaces:

- Welcome Tent/Feedback Station for greeting guests, gift bags, and survey/QR code information.
- Food Tent with tables and chairs for pizza, drinks, and donated sides/desserts.
- Campfire Conversation Area with 2–3 fire pits and camping chairs to encourage relaxed conversation and connection.

The evening will remain informal—no preaching or formal program—just a short welcome, open fellowship, and an opportunity to gather feedback and contact information for future ministry and community events.

We will invite VBS families, with take-home flyers sent on Days 1 and 2 of VBS, announcements and personal invitations at drop-off/pickup, and visibility at VBS registration. We are also planning church social media posts, an article on the church website with an RSVP link, and yard signs.

We hope all of you church members and friends will personally invite neighbors and friends. We will be happy to answer any questions. Just give us a call!

TO RSVP, GO TO OUR WEBSITE!

—Molly Coralluzzo & Matt Dechen, Event Organizers

PRAYER BIBLE WORKSHOP: Many of our members expressed interest in learning to make a Prayer Bible. Several ladies attended our first two workshops in June. See Denise if you're interested!

St. Paul's Calendar
July-August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 **9:30am Worship** 5th Sun after Pent	**29**	**30**	July **1** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**2**	**3**	**4** Independence Day **8:00am Men's Breakfast, Pistons** 8:00pm AA meeting
5 **Red Bird Mission Trip** **9:30am Worship** Native American Awareness Offering 6th Sun after Pent	**6**	**7** **9:00am Food Pantry setup HH** 10:00am Deptford Designers	**8** **7:00am Holy Communion** **8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**9**	**10**	**11** 8:00pm AA meeting
12 **9:30am Worship** 7th Sun after Pent	**13**	**14**	**15** **7:00am Holy Communion** **8:00am Men's Breakfast Pistons** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**16**	**17** **9:30am - 3pm Deptford Designers HH**	**18** 8:00pm AA meeting
19 **9:30am Worship** **10:30am Megan's Pretzel Sunday** 8th Sun after Pent Mission Offering: Seeds of Hope	**20**	**21** 10:00am Deptford Designers	**22** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**23**	**24**	**25** 8:00pm AA meeting
26 **6:30pm - 8:30pm Vacation Bible School** **9:30am Worship** 9th Sun after Pent	**27**	**28** **6:30pm Community Campfire Night**	**29** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**30** **7:30pm VBS Closing Program**	**31** **12:00pm Red Cross Blood Drive**	August **1** **8:00am Men's Breakfast Pistons** 8:00pm AA meeting
2 **9:30am Worship** **11:00am Soup Sunday** 10th Sun after Pentecost Shared Ministries offering	**3**	**4**	**5** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**6**	**7**	**8** 8:00pm AA meeting
9 **9:30am Worship** 11th Sun after Pent	**10**	**11** **9:00am Food Pantry setup HH**	**12** **7:00am Holy Communion** **8:30am St. Paul's Food Pantry** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**13**	**14**	**15** 8:00pm AA meeting
16 **9:30am Worship** **10:30am Megan's Pretzel Sunday** Mission offering: St. John of God School for Special Children 12th Sun after Pent	**17**	**18** 10:00am Deptford Designers	**19** **7:00am Holy Communion** **8:00am Men's Breakfast Pistons** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**20**	**21**	**22** 8:00pm AA meeting
23 **9:30am Worship** 13th Sun after Pent	**24**	**25**	**26** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**27**	**28**	**29** 8:00pm AA meeting
30 **9:30am Worship** 14th Sun after Pent	**31**	**1** 10:00am Deptford Designers	**2** **7:00am Holy Communion** 7:00pm NA Mtg **7:30pm Evening Bible Study Zoom**	**3**	**4**	**5** **8:00am Men's Breakfast Pistons** 8:00pm AA meeting