

# St. Paul's United Methodist Church

## Summer 2025 Newsletter

*St. Paul's is a compassionate community,  
led and transformed by the Spirit.*



### Farewell from Pastor Beckie

*Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.*

*Let all that you do be done in love....  
The grace of the Savior Jesus be with you.  
May love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.*

*I Corinthians 16:13, 23*

Precious St. Paulians,

What a blessing it has been to serve Christ among this congregation for the past four years! It's hard to believe that we were still in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic when I arrived in Ithaca. Thankfully we're now moving forward, led by God's Spirit.

Thank you for all of the love, care, and hospitality that you have shared with me, with my mother, Marilyn, and with our family during this time. Together we have weathered crisis and delighted in celebrations. We've seen transitions, and we've welcomed many new folks into this faith family. What a joy! Although when I arrived here I was not planning to retire this soon, God led me to the decision to retire at the right time for everyone involved. Thank you for understanding that and for celebrating with me.

Now it is my delight to entrust you to the care of Rev. Alicia Wood! Effective July 1, Pastor Alicia will be YOUR pastor. I have full confidence that she'll provide loving care and enthusiastic, capable leadership to the St. Paul's congregation. According to our Clergy Covenant, and in order for you to become better acquainted with Pastor Alicia, I will not be returning to St. Paul's for worship, weddings, funerals, baptisms, or programs for at least a year. These are all wonderful opportunities for your bond with Pastor Alicia to grow and blossom. It's time for St. Paul's to take the next steps into foundational growth. I look forward to reading in your newsletter about the wonderful ministries which will take place.

As you probably know, my last Sunday leading worship at St. Paul's will be June 15. Since Mom and I will be moving during the prior week, I've decided to forego a regular sermon that Sunday, and instead share with you some of the stories from my 43 years of ministry that you haven't heard yet! Don't miss it, as the plan is to share much laughter together. As we all know, God does have a sense of humor!

Ithaca and St. Paul's UM Church will always hold a very special place in my heart and in my memory. May you each, may you all, continue to experience God's blessings!

**Serving Christ with Joy!**  
**Pastor Beckie Sweet**



## **Reception to Honor Pastor Beckie on Sunday, June 8**

Please plan to attend a special reception to honor Pastor Beckie as she leaves St. Paul's and retires from 42 years of ministry. The reception will be held after worship on **Sunday, June 8**, in the downstairs dining room. There will be hearty snacks, beverages, and of course, cake! There will also be ample opportunity for expressions of gratitude and farewell wishes. Please note that Pastor Beckie's last Sunday leading worship will be June 15.

## **In Case of a Pastoral Emergency**

Should you need emergency pastoral care between the time Pastor Beckie retires and Pastor Alicia's arrival, there are two pastors on-call: Rev. Alison Schmied (Lansing) and Rev. Brooke Newell (Chaplain at Longview). In order to reach them, please contact Dee in the church office. You can also call Jami Breedlove-Crouch or Alice Meilman.

## **Special Worship Leaders in June & July**

What a blessing it will be to have three gifted and amazing pastors lead worship and preach for us between the Sunday that Pastor Beckie departs and when Pastor Alicia is welcomed as our new pastor. Please extend St. Paul's' amazing hospitality to these gracious worship leaders. Here is the line-up:

Sunday, June 22nd – Rev. Dr. Joellyn Tuttle

Sunday, June 29th – Rev. Penni Farrington

Sunday, July 6th – Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Quick

## **Peace with Justice Sunday ~ June 15, 2025 ~ Special Offering**

The UMC uses this day to speak out for peace and justice. Our Social Principles call us to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as peacemakers in resolving conflict. We renew our commitment to live into our mission of transforming the world. We must prioritize collaboration among nations, work to reduce the use and need for weapons, and foster just, equitable, and durable solutions to the root causes of conflict. 50% of the offering for Peace with Justice Sunday stays in our Conference to enhance and support local social justice ministries. The other half of the offering supports national and international peacemaking ministries and grants (such as the one we received to underwrite the Witness to Injustice Blanket Exercise). Together, we can accomplish far more than we could on our own. Together, we renew our commitment that people of faith should work to build peace with justice.

## **Chancel Choir's Final Performance of the Season on June 15**

The Chancel Choir concludes their season on June 15 as SPUMC celebrates Pastor Beckie's final Sunday at St. Paul's. Over the past year, this robust ensemble has performed over 30 pieces of music spanning many different styles, genres, and time periods. Rehearsals for the upcoming season begin **September 4**. If you're interested in joining the choir, please contact Maia Finkel at [choirdirector@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:choirdirector@stpaulsithaca.org). This wonderful group of singers is always looking to expand their ranks!

## **Don't Forget to Wear Your Name Tag**

At the request of Pastor Alicia, we're asking that all parishioners begin wearing name tags each week. Name tags can be found on the rack in the foyer. Please tell Jami if you don't have one; she'll be sure you're provided with one the following week.

## Justice Explorers End-of Year Celebration

During worship on May 18, the children and teachers of our Justice Explorers program shared with the congregation what a “typical” Justice Explorers session is like. They lit a candle in memory of Sue Kiner (who was part of their teaching team) and sang and moved to their Module 5/Posts-Easter Opening song, the beautiful Honduran “Alleluia.” (TFWS #2078) They also thanked the many rotating volunteers who make up their teaching team, presenting them with gift bags to mark their participation in sessions.

The students then went downstairs for their last class session on John, Chapter 21, “Peter, Do You Love Me? Feed My Sheep.” In addition to making refrigerator magnets to remind them of foods our Neighborhood Blue Cabinets need for the summer to feed others, they also made no-bake Orange Balls and Coconut Creams shaped like cotton ball sheep to “feed” the congregation in a celebratory Fellowship Time after worship. On display was a felt board depiction of the “leap of faith,” where their figures joined with that of Simon Peter leaping from the fishing boat to greet the Risen Jesus. Finally, their puppet shadow box showed that we help and feed others because we love and are loved by Jesus.



Plans are being made for Justice Explorers next fall. Watch for the fall newsletter as well as bulletin announcements for further info about their anticipated September 21 start. The team is also hoping to set up a date and time to bring teachers and families together in early September. We look forward to having even more children join us next fall!



Noah and Eli Reichert with their grandparents



Anne and Lydia Streets with their parents



## **Fiber Arts Group Field Trip to Viva Acres**

On May 6, a few members of the Fiber Arts group enjoyed a visit to Viva Acres Sheep Farm outside of Trumansburg (Hector). Owned by Juliana Quaresma, a Brazilian Latina wool artist, we met the sheep, heard about how the farm started, and saw some beautiful crafts made of fleece. Julianna is not only a shepherd and craftsperson; she's also a steward of creation. She welcomes prearranged visits, seeks volunteers to get involved with the farm, and offers many different learning programs as well. You can sign up for updates and short newsletters at: [vivaacres@gmail.com](mailto:vivaacres@gmail.com).



## **Catching Up with the OAM**

The Older Adult Ministry hosted yet another delicious Shrove Tuesday pancake brunch in April, with an informative presentation about the many resources available through the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Their next gathering is a Bring-Your-Own-Lunch picnic on **June 10, 12-2pm** at the small pavilion in Stewart Park, featuring a presentation about The Gayogohó:nq (Guy-yo-KO-no) Indigenous people in the Cayuga Lake region. Come September, they'll meet at Library Place for a light supper on the ninth featuring a program by Lifelong. Please contact the church office if you're interested in attending OAM events. Everyone is welcome (especially those 55+)!

## **Check Out "Mug Shots"**

Our latest art show is up in the Welcome Room! Entitled "Mug Shots," the exhibit features parishioner donated mugs and t-shirts emblazoned with the name of a place they've visited or lived. The idea for this show came from Sue Orzel and was very cleverly named by Diana Breedlove-Crouch. Our hope is that the show helps viewers realize how much we all have in common and how fun it is to share our experiences with one another. This is an ongoing display, so if you have a mug or t-shirt to share, please bring it in and give it to Jami. Also: we're always on the look-out for ideas for future shows, so if you come up with something creative you think the congregation would enjoy, please be sure to let her know!

## **Batter Up!**

Baseball season has arrived, and that means only one thing: it's time for St. Paulians to hit the ball park. First up? The Syracuse Mets vs. the Omaha Storm Chasers on **Thursday, July 25 at 6:35 pm** in Syracuse. Tickets are \$18. If you're interested in attending, please contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch at [lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org). Checks should be made out to SPUMC" with "Baseball Game" in the memo line. Checks must be in by **Monday, June 30**.

## **Got Flowers?**

Do you grow flowers? If so, please share a homegrown bouquet with us that can be used to adorn the altar! All you need to do is contact Jami Breedlove-Crouch ([lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org](mailto:lovingcare@stpaulsithaca.org)), who is also the go to person should you wish to purchase a bouquet of flowers for a special occasion or to honor someone in your life. Jami will buy the flowers and take care of arranging them on the altar for you. When the service is through, you may take home the bouquet or leave it to share with others.

## **“Bread for the World” Letters**

In May, St. Paul's joined with other area congregations to sign “Bread for the World” letters. Thanks to the Trump administration, food banks are no longer receiving NSAID and all funding for the WIC program has been brutally slashed. Our congregation signed over 100 letters to our Senators Chuck Schumer and Kristin Gillibrand as well as our Representative Josh Riley advocating for the return of all funding. These letters are part of a stream we hope will turn into a flood when added to pleas from other places of worship. The letters will be hand delivered by Laurie Konwinsky, Deputy Director for Catholic Charities and Coordinator of the Justice and Peace Ministry.



Jami Breedlove-Crouch and Laurie Konwinsky

## **Catching Up with SPUMC Justice Seekers**

On March 30, St Pauls' Justice Seekers Land Acknowledgement Task Group co-hosted an all-church lunch provided by the Lay Leadership Team as part of our “Peace with Justice” project. Featured speaker Elizabeth Brando offered attendees a “primer on the state of Native America,” as well as ways for churches to be allies with their Native American neighbors. She skillfully drew all present into her worldview and life experience, prompting personal connections, thoughtful questions, and ongoing dialogue. Everyone left Elizabeth's talk inspired, emboldened, and embraced. The Justice Seekers' Land Acknowledgement Task Group thanks all who were able to participate. The group is always seeking opportunities to have conversations about building a supportive community, bearing witness, and doing justice vis-a-vis St Paul's origins on Indigenous lands and our Indigenous neighbors today. Justice Seekers would love *your* input on what speaks to you in a Land Acknowledgement statement, along with the ways we can be supportive allies as a faith community. Please send your thoughts/ideas to Karen Kaufmann ([tunafiki@twcny.rr.com](mailto:tunafiki@twcny.rr.com)) or Nancy Potter ([potternancy20@gmail.com](mailto:potternancy20@gmail.com)).

## **Code Blue Breakfast Project**

St. Paul's spent the winter collaborating with other congregations, as well as the Department of Social Services, to aid in providing breakfast foods for those residing in overnight shelter housing. From November through April, parishioners collected boxes of instant oatmeal, breakfast bars, juice boxes, applesauce, tea bags, and instant coffee. Volunteers also brought instant noodles, along with foods that could easily be cooked in the microwave. Thank you to all who participated!

## **Easter Baskets for Unhoused Children**

During Easter Week, St. Paulians prepared 17 Easter baskets which were then delivered to unhoused families via the shelter manager. Baskets included art supplies, toys, stuffed animals, games, and candy. Gift cards were also donated for the parents of the family to use.

## **ACT Annual Meeting**

Area Congregations Together (ACT) will host their annual meeting on **June 29 from 2 to 4pm** at the First Baptist Church in Ithaca (309 N. Cayuga St.). This year's gathering features a panel of organizations that work with immigrants, as well as immigrants themselves who will share their experiences. A discussion and reception will follow.

## **The 2025 Annual Conference: “Believe and See the Glory of God”**

From May 22 through May 24, Pastor Beckie, along with Jami Breedlove-Crouch (St. Paul’s Lay Member to Annual Conference) and Diana Breedlove-Crouch (Finger Lakes Equalization Member) attended Annual Conference, where they were able to worship, take part in voting on new legislation, hear inspiring preaching, and celebrate those members who had passed away in the last year. They also got a chance to celebrate the retirement of pastors as well as welcome the assignments of new placement of pastors that will be taking place in July.

Annual Conference is a great time for worship as well as reconnecting with old friends, and making some new ones! This year was especially heartwarming with our Bishop, Hector A. Burgos Nunez, reiterating that all people are loved by God and are welcome in the United Methodist Church. We also acknowledged the harm that has happened in the past, particularly to LGBTQIA people. Beckie, Jami, and Diana all left Conference knowing that together, SPUMC will go forward believing and seeing the glory of God manifested in those around us, all while building the United Methodist denomination stronger through love and concern for all.

## **Opus Ithaca Summer Music Camps 2025**

At Opus Ithaca, our music camps invite young musicians into a vibrant, supportive community where creativity and collaboration thrive. With expert instruction, fun ensemble experiences, and engaging activities, students deepen their skills and love for music in an encouraging environment. Whether just beginning or advancing on their musical journey, campers grow as confident performers and joyful artists. For further info please go to <https://opusithaca.org/summer-camp>  
**Scholarships available!**

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