

the EVANGEL

St. Paul's Newsletter

April 2026



St. Paul's
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Rochester, Michigan

April 2026

Pastor's Message

Hope Rising This Easter

As I write to you, I'm seeing the crocus pop through the ground and begin to bloom and also reading that snow is in the forecast. I'm reminded how Easter always seems to arrive with a sense of holy anticipation for the signs of new life even as we find winter clinging to its final days before spring is fully resurrected.



Holy Week invites us to walk the story of Jesus together. From the excitement of Palm Sunday parades with a live donkey and children waving palm branches, to the quiet intimacy of the table on Maundy Thursday, to the sorrow and honesty of Good Friday and the powerful music of Rutter's Requiem, we are reminded that faith is not about pretending that life is always easy. Jesus' story takes us through the full landscape of human experience—hope, betrayal, grief, courage, and love that refuses to give up on the world.

It's the journey that makes Easter morning all the more powerful. Easter is not simply a celebration of something that happened long ago. It is a proclamation that God's life is still breaking into our world today. In a time when many feel weary, divided, or uncertain about the future, the resurrection reminds us that love is stronger than fear, hope is stronger than despair, and new life is always possible with God.

What's more is that Easter is meant to be experienced together. Holy Week creates space for reflection, honesty, and renewal. Easter Sunday becomes a moment when joy spills over in fresh abundance. At our sunrise service, youth and young adults will lead us in our first celebration from darkness into God's great light, life, and love. Join us in the Parlor afterward for Easter breakfast. At our Open Door and Sanctuary celebrations, music swells, voices rise, and we remember that God is still at work bringing resurrection where we least expect it.

This is just the beginning of April! Join us each Sunday after Easter for **Now What? Life After Easter**. You surely won't want to miss our Night of 1,000 Blessings!

Whether you have been with us for years or are simply looking for a place to reconnect with faith, this is a beautiful time to step in. There is room here for your questions, your hopes, your doubts, and your story. And it's also the perfect time to invite someone to sit with you, to serve with you, and to experience new life at St. Paul's as we proclaim anew, "Christ is risen, indeed!"

Blessings,

Elbert Dulworth

Senior Pastor



Holy Thursday

Thursday, April 2

7 p.m. in Hickey Hall

Join us for an impactful Holy Thursday worship service featuring interactive stations: communion, prayer at

the cross, anointing, and the opportunity to plant a seed symbolizing the death of Jesus on Good Friday. **All are welcome.**

The Way of the Cross

A Service of Prayer & Reflection

Friday, April 3

Noon in Rickard Chapel

This Good Friday service invites you into a quiet, prayerful remembering of the final hours of Jesus's life. Moving through the events of his suffering and crucifixion, there will be times of prayer, silent reflection, and scripture readings. This service will create space for reverence, grief, gratitude, and hope as we consider the way of the cross. It will honor the depth of Christ's sacrificial love and the mystery of redemption that leads us toward Easter morning. Led by Pastor Rick Kress and our Prayer Ministry Team.



Easter Dove Release

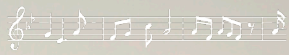
Easter Sunday, April 5

10:40 a.m. in North Parking Lot

12:20 p.m. in South Parking Lot

All are welcome to join us for a live dove release which symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus on Easter morning. See the beauty of white doves as they are released and make their way back home.

HARMONY IN THE HILLS



Tenebrae Service

**Good Friday, April 3
7 p.m. in the Sanctuary**

Observe Good Friday by attending this moving service featuring St. Paul's choir and orchestra performing John Rutter's *Requiem*.



Paradise Harmony

Friday, April 17 at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Harmony in the Hills presents the world premiere of Jeremy Crosmer's original composition **Paradise Harmony** performed by Detroit Symphony Orchestra's harpist Alyssa Katahara, clarinetist Trinita Rives, and cellist Jeremy Crosmer. The concert will include memorable arrangements of favorites such as *Moon River*, *Misty*, *Fly Me to the Moon*, and more. **Admission is FREE.** Donations appreciated.



Operation Clean Sweep

**Saturday, March 28; 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Brunch served at 11:30 a.m.**

It's time for spring cleaning! Volunteers are needed for some 'tidying up' and cleaning at St. Paul's that goes above and beyond any custodial responsibilities. Scan QR code to sign up.



NIGHT of 1,000 BLESSINGS

Sunday, April 19; 5 - 7 p.m. in Hickey Hall

Come for a wonderful evening of mission and a chance to serve joyfully together. We will make an angel craft that will be delivered to health care workers and hospital staff to show our appreciation for their dedication and hard work before enjoying a delicious meal.

We will also collect 500 boxes of cereal for Neighborhood House Food Pantry. **This is a great mission opportunity for families!**

Community Garden Clean-up and Planting

Saturday, April 18 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Rochester Community Garden

Help grow healthy vegetables to donate to the Neighborhood House Food Pantry. We need volunteers all season to plant, water, harvest, and deliver to the food pantry. No previous gardening experience is needed! **You choose your own level of time commitment.** Scan QR code to sign-up



**April 25
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Cass Community Social Services

Hands with Detroit

**Saturday, April 25; 9 a.m. - noon
Meet at 8 a.m. at St. Paul's South
Parking Lot to carpool**

Join us for our annual Hands with Detroit mission day with Cass Community Social Services; 1945 Webb, Detroit, MI 48206.

This is open to ages 10 and older, giving everyone a chance to serve together! Lunch will be provided. **RSVP** by emailing Amy@stpaulsrochester.org to coordinate carpooling.

Classes & Groups



Open Table

Sundays, April 12 - May 3
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. in Hickey Hall

Open Table is a welcoming community where friendships are formed and hearts are nourished. Together, we explore faith, support one another, and discover something new - about God, about each other, and about ourselves. **Come as you are. There's a seat for you.**



Four Portraits of Jesus

The Message of the Gospels
Monday, April 13 - May 11; 7 - 8:30 p.m. Parlor
Tuesday, April 14 - May 12; 1 - 2:30 p.m. Parlor
Led by Rev. Rick Kress

The four Gospels tell us nearly everything we know about the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet each Gospel paints a different portrait of Jesus. The class will explore why this is, how it shows up in each individual Gospel, and what these four portraits tell us about following Jesus today. This interactive Bible study will allow participants to discover the message of the four Gospels and learn about Jesus in fresh ways. NO CLASS Rummage Sale week.



Beer & Hymns

Tuesday, April 21 at 7 p.m.
Gus O'Connors 324 S. Main St. Rochester
Sing along with us! St Paul's provides the appetizers, and you provide your voice. Participants buy their own drinks.

Looking Ahead - Email by April 27

Learning to Walk with God - 2026

Thursdays, May 7 - August 27
9 - 10 a.m. Rochester Municipal Park
and other locations for variety

Connect with your physical and spiritual fitness and well-being. Walk with us for physical exercise, socializing, and a spiritual component that gives everyone thoughts to ponder about how to better follow in Jesus' footsteps. Discuss and reflect upon the meaning of inspiring artwork, Christian visual works, prose and poetry and how scripture compliments the message. We also track our steps and play games with a Christian twist to keep it fun! All ability levels are welcome. When walking in Rochester Municipal Park, park near the Police Station. **Please email walking coordinator Judy Smouter** at smouterj@comcast.net by April 27 if you plan to participate.



United Methodist Men's Breakfast

Saturday, April 11
8 a.m. in the Parlor

All men are invited to join us for breakfast and brotherhood. Invite a guest. **Join us!** Contact Dave deSteiger at davidrdesteiger@gmail.com.



SPARK Book Group

Thursday, April 16
1:30 p.m. in the Parlor

Join us as we discuss *Standing in the Rainbow* by Fannie Flagg. **We welcome new members!** If you have questions, call Linda Burnard at 248-765-5511.

UWF Book Club

Thursday, April 16
5:30 p.m. in Room 132

Join our stimulating discussion of *The Matter of Little Losses: Finding Grace to Grieve the Big (and Small) Things* by Rachel Marie Kang. Through prose and poetry, Kang says pain and suffering do not have to be buried and kept from others. Contact Nancy Shannon at nancgs@aol.com with questions.



J.O.Y.

Just Older Youth
Tuesday, April 21
12 p.m. in Hickey Hall

Please join us for a brown bag lunch with dessert, tea and coffee provided. Everyone age 60 and above is invited to share in this special fellowship group! Each one invite one... we will all be glad we did!





HUGS

For mothers & grandmothers of all ages
Wednesdays, 9:30 - 11 a.m. Room 132

Apr 1 Spring Break - NO HUGS

Apr 8 Crucial Conversations

It's not easy to navigate world views and WORD views as we figure out how to raise kind, empathetic kids who aspire to spread God's love to themselves, their families, and the community.

Apr 15 What Does it Mean to Be Easter People? We've heard the expression, but have we paused to consider what this really means? Explore what it means to be renewed and to answer the invitation to lead transformational lives.

Apr 22 Wild Card Wednesday

Feel free to bring goodies or just come as you are for coffee, tea, and conversation as we continue to explore ways to fill our cups with joy and peace by trusting God.

Apr 29 Game Day with a Twist

Instead of our conventional game day hilarity, we are mixing it up with a bit of March madness. We hope you'll join us in the fun! **LUNCH BUNCH 11:30 - 12:30** Bring one ingredient to include in a potluck salad. We always have extra, so come even if you forget your ingredient.

Scan QR code to reserve childcare.

HUGS observes the Rochester Community Schools calendar and will not meet when schools are closed.



Girls Night Out Event We're planning a fun spring outing! Check FaceBook (HUGS Mothers' Group of St. Paul's UMC) or Instagram (stpaulhugs).

United Women in Faith

We Believe Love in Action Can Change the World
April Circle Meetings

- **Faith Circle** - Wednesday, April 8 at 1 p.m. in the Library.
- **Patience Circle** - Thursday, April 9 at 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor - Methodist Women's Journey.
- **New Hope Circle** - Thursday, April 9 daytime field trip TBD.

Exec. Board Meeting: Thursday, April 16; 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor.



Start cleaning closets!

Spring Rummage Sale

Spring Sale - May 8 & 9

Drop off days and times:

Monday, May 4 from 5 - 8 p.m.

Tuesday, May 5 from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Donating Jewelry: Sometimes jewelry gets missed if it is in a regular donation bag. If you want to bring jewelry in early, please leave it in the designated box in the main office.

Donations for Unique Boutique: If you have designer clothing, purses, scarves, etc. please pack them separately and take donations directly to Rickard Chapel, the new Unique Boutique location.

Donating a cell phone? Unlock it and delete information on it.

Can you volunteer? Contact Kathy Lutey at drlutey2@wowway.com.

Scan to Volunteer



Scan to Donate Food



Thank you for your generous support!



St. Paul's Garden Club

Wednesday, April 15 & 29

9 a.m. - noon in the Garden of Hope

Gardeners of all ages and abilities are invited to spring into action to plant, prune, mulch, share our friendship and knowledge as we rejuvenate the church grounds. We hope to meet to maintain the gardens every other Wednesday through the summer and early

autumn. Please bring your own garden tools, gloves, hat, and a water bottle. For more information contact Sigrid Grace at sigridorchard@gmail.com.

Please Remember...

Remember our Older Members

Send a card letting them know that you are remembering them and praying for them. Our older members get so much enjoyment from reading all of the notes and cards.



St. Paul's Preschool Corner Happy Spring!

Spring has arrived, and our preschoolers are excited to spend more time outside enjoying the playground. Our Easter celebration will be filled with egg hunts, special activities, and learning about Jesus and the true meaning of Easter. April brings many new learning opportunities as we explore weather, flowers, frogs, and bugs. Exploration and hands-on discovery make learning especially meaningful for preschoolers, and we look forward to all the adventures this season will bring.

We are so thankful for our wonderful parents who joined us for parent-teacher conferences. It is always a joy to share the many successes and growth we've seen in our students this year.

We have limited spots available for the 2026-2027 school year. If you know anyone interested, we would love to provide more information and offer a tour of our program. Please visit stpaulsrochester.org/preschool.

Thank you for your continued support!
Ms. Michelle Staarmann



Community Egg Hunt

Saturday, March 28 at 10 a.m.
McGregor Elementary School
1101 First St. Rochester

St. Paul's will be hosting a community Egg Hunt this year at McGregor Elementary School. This is a NEW location for our annual Egg Hunt. This event is **FREE** and **EVERYONE** is **WELCOME!** Hope to see you there!

Palm Sunday

March 29 at 9:30 & 11 a.m.

Palm Sunday worship will feature palm parades and a chance to visit the donkey during Sunday school.



Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 5; 9:30 & 11 a.m.

Children will worship with their families on Easter. Children's activities will be available from our ushers and ambassadors but feel free to bring busy bags from home if you would like. Childcare available for PreK and younger.

MS Youth Group 6th - 8th graders & friends

Sundays; 5 - 7 p.m. Hickey Hall; Dinner \$5

Apr 5 No Youth Group - Happy Easter!
Apr 12 Spring Fever
Apr 19 Night of 1000 Blessings
Apr 26 YouLead
May 3 End of Year Party off campus



HS Youth Group 9th - 12th graders & friends

Sundays; 5 - 7 p.m. Lounge (meet in Hickey Hall) Dinner \$5

Apr 5 No Youth Group - Happy Easter!
Apr 12 Spread the Love
Apr 19 Night of 1000 Blessings
Apr 26 YouLead
May 3 End of Year Party off campus

No matter what the activity, laughter is guaranteed!



Easter Sunrise Service

Sunday, April 5; 7:30 a.m. under Portico

We are looking for students to do a special reading at the Easter Sunrise Service. If you would like to participate in this service, email Jodi at Jodi@stpaulsrochester.org.

HS Meet & Eat

Wednesday, April 22

6:30 p.m. at Kruse's Paint Creek Tavern
613 N. Main Street, Rochester

All High School youth and friends are welcome for a FREE dinner out. Bring your smile and a big appetite. Please RSVP by April 19 to Jodi Stuermer at Jodi@stpaulsrochester.org.



Scholarships Available Application Deadline is April 15

Applications and information available at stpaulsrochester.org.
 (Follow 'Scholarship' quick link at bottom of homepage).

St. Paul's Scholarship

Scholarships are available to eligible members of St. Paul's United Methodist Church who have demonstrated service to the church or community. Scholarships may be used for tuition or room and board at an accredited college or university, vocational program, apprenticeship or training program.



St. Paul's United Women in Faith Scholarship

St. Paul's UWF offer scholarships for women and youth members of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Scholarships in the amount of \$500 will be available for higher education and \$250 for summer camp.

Don't wait until the last minute! Start your application now!



Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday **March 29**

9:30 a.m. Open Door Worship
11 a.m. Traditional Worship

Holy Thursday **April 2**

7 p.m. Worship in Hickey Hall

Good Friday **April 3**

7 p.m. Tenebrae in Sanctuary
John Rutter's *Requiem* with choirs & orchestra

Easter Sunday **April 5**

7:30 a.m. Sunrise Service under the Portico
9:30 a.m. Open Door Worship in Hickey Hall
11 a.m. Traditional Worship in Sanctuary



Vacation Bible School

July 20 - 24; 9 a.m. - noon

Step through the mist into Rainforest Falls, overflowing with wild waterfalls, towering trees and colorful creatures. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a life-long adventure, discovering the nature of God, and exploring what it means to be rooted in relationship with

their creator, a safe place in life's storms. **Registration is OPEN April 1** for children age 4 (as of September 1, 2026) through 5th grade. Adult and Youth volunteers needed!



Blood Drive

Monday, April 13; 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Hickey Hall

The need for blood is great all year long. Schedule an appointment by calling Bill Molloy at 248-892-1705 or go to redcrossblood.org (sponsor code 'stpaulunited').

Holy

Communion



April 5 at 7:30 a.m.

at Easter Sunrise Service

April 12 at 9:30 a.m. Hickey Hall & 11 a.m. Sanctuary

The sacrament of Holy Communion celebrates the presence of Christ and helps us find strength for Christian living. In the United Methodist Church, communion is open to all who intend to lead a Christian life.

Blood Pressure Clinic

Sunday, April 12

10:30 - 11 a.m. &

12 - 12:30 p.m.

Narthex

Stop by to have your blood pressure checked.



Looking Ahead...

May

- 2nd UMM Breakfast
- Support For Caregivers
- 3-9th Rummage Sale Week
- 10th Mother's Day - Baptisms
- Honor Our Mothers
- 15th HITH Concert City Lights Chorus
- 17th Confirmation
- 18th Blood Drive
- 19th JOY - Just Older Youth
- UWF Spring Dinner
- Theology on Tap
- 21st Spark Book Group
- UWF Book Club
- 25th Memorial Day - office closed

June

- 6th UMM Breakfast
- Support For Caregivers
- 7th Grad Sunday/Senior Brunch
- 10th Concert in the Garden
- Dave Sharp Worlds Quartet
- 15th Blood Drive
- 16th JOY - Just Older Youth
- 18th Spark Book Group
- UWF Book Club
- 21st Outdoor Worship begins
- 21-27th Youth Worktrip

SUNDAY WORSHIP **Worship with us!**

The Open Door Service

9:30 a.m. in Hickey Hall

Traditional Service

11 a.m. in Sanctuary

5	Easter	7:30 a.m. Sunrise	9:30 a.m. Open Door	11 a.m. Traditional
		Matthew 28:1-10	Still Rolling Stones	Rev. Dulworth
12	Communion			
		John 20:19-31	I Want to Believe...But	Rev. May
19	Luke 24:13-35		When Hope Feels Lost	Rev. Dulworth
26	John 10:1-10		No Sheep Left Behind	Rev. Kress

SERMON SERIES **April**