

SHARING GOOD NEWS ST PAUL'S UCC DELANO MN

Issue 2 Volume 3

February 2026

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

02/01: Communion
02/01: Vote/New Pastor
02/14: Valentine's Day
02/15: St. Paul's Annual Meeting
02/16: Presidents' Day
02/18: Ash Wednesday

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

02/01: Holm
02/08: Specht
02/15: Pancake Breakfast
02/22: Bailey

BIRTHDAYS

02/17: Tracy Gripenrog
02/20: Joyce Specht
02/28: Sarah Czech

Meet our New Pastor, Reverend Karen Larson!



(left to right) Karen's husband Steve Jackson, **Rev. Karen Larson**, Mike Hagerty and Charlie Leck

Message from Deanna Becker, Pastoral Search Committee Chair

At a special congregational meeting on February 1, 2026, the members in attendance voted to enter into covenant with Rev. Karen Larson to become our new Settled Pastor.

Rev. Larson will be working 1/2 time and will begin her pastorate with us on March 3, 2026.

We are excited to welcome Rev. Larson. We have a wonderful church community, and we will be blessed with a wonderful pastor to guide us as we continue our ministry in the name of Jesus Christ.

Pastor's Note



But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believe . . .”

-- *II Timothy 3:14a*

As I write this, our congregation is fast coming upon the opportunity to call a settled pastor. So, God willing, this will be the last Pastor's Note from me. I have enjoyed my time with you so much and appreciate all your care and support! I encourage you to greet your new pastor with the same warmth and openness.

In II Timothy, Paul wrote a farewell message to his beloved co-worker in Christ, Timothy. I am certainly not facing what Paul was about to face! And there is some debate about whether this letter in its current form was actually written by Paul, I'm going to accept tradition at face value here. I thought what Paul wrote to encourage Timothy (II Timothy 4:2-5) I would also encourage you to do, as co-workers in Christ with your new pastor.

Proclaim the message – You've got Good News to share in a dark time! Don't forget to share it. Not only in how you live as individuals and what you do as community, but in *telling* people the mission St. Paul's is carrying out.

Be persistent – Paul adds, “whether the time is favorable or unfavorable”. It is discouraging to share something exciting and be greeted with indifference or even hostility! Don't let that stop you! Your job is to share, it is up to other people and the Spirit for whether your message is received or not.

Convince, rebuke, encourage – Paul adds, “with utmost patience”. Remember to engage people. Don't just ‘preach at them’. Meet them where they are. Be vulnerable yourselves. Listen well as talk.

Fulfill your ministry – You have a “ministry”. You have been called by God since your baptism. Don't feel sheepish. You have a calling! And you will need to work together with your new pastor to fulfill it!

As for me, I will always remember St. Paul's fondly as a wonderful, eager, faithful community. I would love to hear from you how life is going for you. “Keep the faith!”

God's Peace, *Pastor Kent*

Attention all Members:

St. Paul's United Church of Christ (UCC) in Delano will hold the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday Feb. 15, immediately following the 9:15 service. This meeting is open to all, but only members will be able to vote. Ballot voting will take place for 3 Church Council positions, and a voice vote will be needed to accept the 2026 Budget presented by the council.

A special pancake breakfast meal prepared by Dave Rieder will be served in the Fellowship Hall following the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. Expect the meeting to last approximately 3/4 hour.

St. Paul's UCC Annual Meeting Agenda for Year 2025 February 15, 2026

Call to Order

Opening Prayer - Shala

Call of the Roll – Finding a Quorum (15% of members required, which is 7 members.

Approval of Minutes of Annual Meeting for 2024 held Feb. 16, 2025

Agenda approval (voice vote)

Financial Business

Financial Report Recap for 2025
Investment Fund Summary for 2025
Mission Report for 2025
Profit and Loss Statement for 2025
Review & Approval of Proposed Budget for 2026 **(voice vote)**

Pastor's Report

Cemetery Committee Report

Worship Committee Report

Accomplishments in 2025

Five Year Plan Report

Election of Council Members

Terms expiring: Judy Crosby, Meg Conrad and Mike Hagerty
Nomination of candidates for the 3 expiring terms.
Vote by paper ballot
Tabulation and announcement of results

Motion to Adjourn (voice vote)

The Lord's Prayer

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting

February 16, 2025

Church Council President Michael Hagerty called the meeting to order at 9:51 a.m.

An **Opening Prayer** by Pastor Kent Meyer was followed by a physical count of 18 members present which constituted a quorum.

Minutes from last year's meeting on 2/18/2024 were approved. M- Charlie Leck S- Shala Holm *

Treasurer Jim Holm presented the **Financial Report**. This year's meeting packet included a written recap of our financial report. Jim highlighted the recap. We met our 2024 budget projection within about \$200, in large part because of generous contributions late in the year. We were lucky to have insurance pay for a new roof and to several people who volunteered time and talents to save the church thousands of dollars. Huge "Thanks" were given. Following the advice of our financial advisor at Green Wealth Mgt. we withdrew \$10,000 in profits from the funds. This money will be used in 2025, as we were able to meet our financial commitments at year end without using it. The financial position of the church is strong starting 2025. The 2025 Budget was presented at \$78,610. This amount is about \$13,000 higher than 2024 due to more building maintenance needed and other increases in expenses as noted. Meeting this increase will require larger offerings in 2025, or the use of funds from our investment account. The 2025 Budget was approved. M- Lani BrownW S-Charlie*

Pastor's Report: Interim Pastor Kent Meyer gave a recap of his submitted written report. He clarified how he is reimbursed for mileage charged for extra trips above regular home-to-church requirements. Kent said that he was very pleased to be our interim pastor and has felt welcomed by all here. He had suggestions for when we hire a settled pastor; it's important that a list of home bound people to be visited be available, and that in general we do better at communicating our decisions & procedures to a new pastor.

Cemetery & Worship Committee Reports were presented by Judy Crosby. The cemetery committee did not meet formally in 2024, but Judy mentioned a couple of needed improvements and the hope that the council will revisit a request made at the 2023 meeting about a change to the Church Bylaws concerning the cemetery. The worship committee met regularly in 2024 and has focused a lot on organ & carillon repairs. They get input from Pastor Meyer about special music and services. Judy also included information about how the church calling list operates in communicating with everyone during weather & health emergencies. Cemetery Committee = Laurence Reider, Chuck Reider, Judy Crosby and Pastor Kent Meyer .Worship Committee = Deanna Becker, Gretchen Stewart, Lani Brown-Worley and Judy Crosby.

5 Year Plan Report and Accomplishments in 2024 were summarized by Mike Hagerty. Highlights of the accomplishments: Total roof replacement and exterior building repairs that were needed while working on the roof were done, with over 400 hours of labor donated by Dave Reider & family, and Hal Becker. Finished the handicap-accessible rest room and hallway renovations. We hired an interim pastor, Kent Meyer. Extremely generous financial donations allowed support for girl's schooling in Liberia to begin, and other missions were supported, including UCC 5 for 5 missions throughout the year. Mike talked about each category of the 5 Year Plan; Community Outreach, Communication, Physical Building (exterior), Indoor Improvements and Special Events. Our active and willing congregation has continued to pursue the goals of each of the categories such as hosting cultural dinners, Lenten suppers & book studies, painting & other maintenance tasks on our building, and working hard to complete the search for our next settled pastor. The council plans to add the category "Feed our Members" that would include things like encouraging use of the new library area. (Continued Page 5)

St. Paul's Delano Food Shelf Voluntary Duty in January 2026



Joyce, Peter and Shelly

Geralyn, Vicki and Lani

Message From Joyce Specht, our Food Shelf Coordinator

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped meet our volunteer commitment at Helping Hands Food Shelf in Delano during January. Every time we help, we are told again and again how great the volunteers from St. Paul's are. ALL of our volunteers returned repeatedly to help out. So, thanks again to Laura McDonald, Shelly Hussing, Vicki Hagerty, Lani Brown-Worley, Shala Holm, Peter and Geralyn Lucht, Gretchen Stewart, Deanna Becker, and Joyce and Cliff Specht.

Minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting Continued from Page 4)

Election of Council Members: Dave Reider, Jim Holm and Lani Brown-Worley placed their names in nomination for the 2 seats up for election to serve the next 2 year term on the council. A written ballot vote of members was taken, and Jim was chosen to continue on the council with Lani chosen to replace Dave. During the nomination process Dave had indicated a desire to focus on maintenance issues if someone else wished to be on the council. We thank Dave for all his work during many years on the council.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Charlie Leck and seconded by Sam McCurry at 11:59 am.*

Benediction given by Pastor Kent, and the service closing song "God be with You" was sung.

Fellowship pancake & sausage meal was served by Dave Reider and Gretchen Stewart following the meeting.

M=motion S=second *indicates the motion was adopted by voice majority vote of members

**Copies of reports, agendas, financial documents, and minutes referred to were made available to all members.



SHARING GOOD NEWS

February 2026

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