

SHARING GOOD NEWS ST PAUL'S UCC DELANO MN

Volume 3 Issue 7

July 2026

JULY CALENDAR

07/04 Independence Day

07/05 Communion

07/18 Wright/Sherburn Pride Festival

07/26 National Parents' Day

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

07/05 Hussing/McDonald

07/12 Stewart

07/19 Hagerty

07/26 Brazelton

BIRTHDAYS

07/04 Judy Crosby

07/08 Andy Rieder

07/13 Chuck Rieder

07/15 Penny Bailey

07/23 Shala Holm



Gracious and Liberating God,

We thank you for the gift of this land and the freedoms we enjoy. As we celebrate Independence Day, we pray not just for the privileges of our own nation, but for the well-being of all your people across the globe.

We confess that our country has not always lived up to its promise of liberty and justice for all. Forgive our shortcomings, heal our deep divisions, and dismantle the systems of oppression that still bind too many of our neighbors.

Give us the courage to be instruments of your peace. Inspire us to use our freedom not for self-interest, but to serve the vulnerable, welcome the stranger, and fiercely pursue equity and inclusion. Strengthen our resolve to build a society where every voice is valued and where love is our greatest witness.

May our gratitude for this nation be expressed through our daily commitment to the common good, working together to bring your realm on earth as it is in heaven.

In the spirit of the One who calls us to be "that they may all be one," we pray. Amen.

July 2026

Note from Pastor Karen Larson



Wrestling with the Fourth of July.

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good...” (Romans 12:9, NRSVUE)

I was 14 years old for the Bicentennial of our nation in 1976, and remember it as a very exciting shared experience for my hometown. It seemed like everyone in Owatonna was involved. There were writing contests on the Constitution, and poster contests on freedom. There were fireworks and parades. The Bicentennial was the theme of the county fair, the 4-H talent show, and school pep rallies all year. Red, white and blue was an ever-present motif.

Sadly, I don’t detect as much enthusiasm this year on our nation’s 250th birthday—maybe even in Delano, where all things Fourth of July get ratcheted up a notch.

At our house, we are flying the American flag in gratitude for what we love about our country. I want to “hold fast to what is good” about my homeland and people.

I still believe democracy is the political system of governance most likely to lead to human dignity and welfare. I still believe in checks and balances on the exercise of power, in the freedom of conscience, and in the value of a healthy exchange of diverse ideas and ways. I still believe that all human beings are created equal and “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

At the same time, from the perspective of my faith, I firmly believe God is the God of *all* nations, without favor. I believe that the Kingdom of God is unlike any earthly nation, government, system or power structure. I believe the Church, and any religion, must remain separate from the state—or risk corruption, the loss of its prophetic voice, and meaninglessness. “Beware of any Christian movement that needs a government in order to succeed,” writes Rev. Benjamin R. Cremer.

The flag is not my religion. But I fly it proudly as an emblem of what a people can dream of together, and in gratitude for all the courageous ones who have given so much—even their lives—in order to form “a more perfect Union.”

Join us on Sunday, July 5, as we remember, lament, praise God, sing, and pray for our nation. May the festivities this year—and the family time you share—renew your sense of hope and possibility for the future.

Holding fast to the good with you,
Pastor Karen

P.S. On July 7, I will be one of many at a clergy press conference on the Minnesota state capitol steps to share our commitment to protecting voting rights now under threat, and to call for local, state and federal officials to publicly pledge to protect free and fair elections.

Happy Pride Month!

Pride Sunday at St. Paul's UCC will be July 12! It's a great time to invite friends and neighbors who care about affirming the full, God-beloved humanity of our LGBTQIA+ friends.

Our Opening and Affirming Covenant, adopted November 15, 2015:

The congregation of St. Paul's United Church of Christ covenants to be open and affirming to all people, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people and to celebrate and share the reassurance that we are all equal participants in the love and grace of God. We covenant with God and one another to extend welcome into the faith life and ministry of the church to all followers and seekers of Christ without fear, prejudice or discrimination. We celebrate the diversity of human nature and human relationships. We thank God for the gift of sexuality. We recognize that sexual orientation and gender expression are wonderful, varied, and complex parts of our humanness. We seek to support human relationships that are based on love, commitment, and mutual care and to open ourselves to renewed understandings of God's presence in our lives, our church, our communities, and the world.



We will have a booth at the above event 11:00 am – 3:00 pm in Ellison Park, Monticello. Please talk to Meg Conrard if you can provide cookies, bottled water or coolers for this event. We hope you will join us!

Save the Date:

- August 13, 6:00 pm – Roe Family Singers free outdoor concert at Delano United Methodist Church. Bring your own chairs/blankets. Invite anyone you want. It's a big lawn!
- September 12, 5:00 pm - Indonesia Cultural Dinner at St. Paul's UCC
- September 21 – Golf for Love fundraising tournament for Love INC Heartland



Many thanks to our cemetery committee Judy Crosby, Laurence Rieder and Chuck Rieder for the new cemetery sign. Judy led the group to replace the old sign.



“All actual life is encounter.

Thank you to Monty Hillman for sharing this quote from Martin Buber after the June 30 worship service. Buber explores how human beings connect with the world, each other and the divine. He distinguishes the “I-Thou” encounter, which is mutual, vulnerable connection with another being, from the “I-It” experience, which treats the other as an object to be analyzed, used or consumed.

Profit and Loss
St. Paul's United Church of Christ
June 1 – June 30, 2026

GL Account	Total
Income	
49500 Tithes/Offerings	\$8648.00
Expenses	
50000 Staffing	\$3868.00
51000 Buildings & Grounds	\$858.47
51100 Office Expenses	\$443.28
57000 Worship Expenses	\$300.00
61700 Computer Support & Supplies	\$38.00
61800 Conferences and Meetings	\$226.30
63301 Property Insurance	\$2200.00
68600 Utilities	\$304.03
Total for Expenses	\$8238.08
Net Income	\$409.92

Indonesia: Our Next Cultural Dinner



In February and March Joyce and Cliff Specht traveled for 17 days to Indonesia which is made up of 17,500 islands. Only 922 islands are inhabited. They took a cruise from Sydney, Australia to Komodo Island, Lombok Island, and finally to Bali. Islam is the primary religion except in Bali which is Hindu. They all live and work together joyfully and peacefully. Bali's oldest temple is inhabited by wild monkeys, and Komodo Island has the Komodo dragons which are the world's largest lizards. On Saturday, September 12 at 5:00, they will host a Cultural Dinner with many recipes primarily from Bali. We will produce a cookbook for all to select their favorite recipe to bring to the dinner. Please mark your calendar to save that date.





Thank You!

To the members of
St. Paul's UCC, Delano

**for being a 5 for 5 Congregation of
the United Church of Christ in 2025 .**

5 for 5 Congregations support Our Church's Wider Mission Basic Support and the
Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, The Christmas Fund, and Strengthen
the Church Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ.



Karen Georgia A. Thompson
General Minister and President
United Church of Christ



Conference Minister




Contact Us

Church Phone: (763) 972-6689

Pastor Cell Phone: (507) 696-2488

Pastor Email: laronkarenrose@gmail.com

Pastor Karen Larson at Church Office on Tuesdays

Email: Delanoucc@gmail.com

Website: www.delanoucc.org

