

SHARING GOOD NEWS ST PAUL'S UCC DELANO MN

Volume 3 Issue 9

September 2026

SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

09/06 Communion

09/07 Labor Day

09/12 Indonesia Dinner

09/13 Be the Church Service

09/13 Council Meeting (after fellowship)

09/20 Be the Church Series (Part 2)

09/20 Installation Service 3:00

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

09/06 Worley

09/13 Deitering

09/20 Stewart

09/27 Conrard



**St Paul's UCC
Welcomes New
Pastor Karen Larson**



**See an article that Chris Brazelton hopes to get
published in the Delano Herald Journal. (see page 4)**

BIRTHDAYS

09/01 Larry Brazelton

09/01 Charlie Leck

09/02 Anne Leck

09/08 Chris Brazelton

09/09 Laura McDonald

09/14 Hal Becker

09/19 Steve Jackson



Beautiful things happen when you share.

I had waaaaay too many cannas & wanted to get rid of the extras. I asked a friend in the gardening business if she would have a use for them. Sandy said yes!!! This is the beautiful flower bed she created. Penny Bailey





September 2026

One body in Christ.

“... so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.” (Romans 12:5, NRSVUE)

My journal reminds me that on November 19 of last year, “I interviewed with St. Paul’s UCC in Delano and fell in love with them.” I will always remember that day, sitting at two big tables in the hall with Shala Holm, Judy Crosby, Mike Hagerty, Laura McDonald, Shelly Hussing, and Deanna Becker. Our conversation flowed naturally, as if we’d always known each other.

It felt like coming home.

Two weeks later, Deanna wrote to say they would like to extend an offer and invited me to come discuss a call agreement. I hesitated. It was all happening so fast! Could I really work again, while helping Steve with Asa every weekend? Could I keep my hours at half-time or below, when every pastoral call I’d ever had soon consumed my life? Was I in love or just infatuated with some lovely new people?

Steve and I had a long, ongoing conversation. God and I did, too. I talked to my spiritual director and to my JoJos—four seminary friends who know me inside and out. I phoned all your references, who made me more aware of how St. Paul’s has caught Jesus’s vision of beloved community.

Finally, after being very honest with the search committee about my limitations, I said yes. I wanted to be part of what you’re doing here. The next step was leading worship with you on February 1 and awaiting the results of your vote. You said yes, too. I would become a part of you!

Now, we’ve had six months together, and it’s time to make it official. Representatives from the Minnesota Conference of the UCC will join us at 3:00 Sunday afternoon, September 20, for a Service of Installation. I will promise to serve our church faithfully. You will promise to work with me in the ministry of the Gospel. Other ministers in the Conference—which has been involved throughout the search and call process—will affirm the covenant we all share. In the UCC, there are no top-down mandates, but instead *covenant*—promises among partners—to listen, walk together, and support one another in shared Christian witness.

The Body of Christ is a place and a people to belong to and serve with, as the children of God. I give thanks above all to the Holy Spirit for leading us to each other, and continuing to guide us with each other.

Belonging with you,
Pastor Karen

Special Sundays September 13 and 20.

On September 13 and 20, members of the church will speak briefly about their personal experience with each of the nine lines of our colorful outdoor “Be the Church” signs. It is a great opportunity to invite friends, family and neighbors to join us. Our speakers are:

September 13

Gretchen Stewart “Care for the poor”
Mike Hagerty “Fight for the powerless”
Lani Brown-Worley “Share earthly and spiritual resources”
Vicki Hagerty “Embrace diversity”
Joyce Specht “Enjoy this life”

September 20

Mary Carter “Protect the environment”
Penny Bailey “Forgive often”
Chris Brazelton “Reject racism”
Rev. Charlie Leck “Love God”

Please return to church at 3:00 pm on September 20 for a formal **Service of Installation** for our new pastor, with leadership from the Minnesota Conference of the UCC. It will be a brief service and celebration.

Thank you to Dave Rieder, Logan Rieder, Jim Holm, and neighbor Jeff Etzel for installing a second Be the Church sign on the south side of the church and straightening the original sign by the front door.



Season of Creation, September 27 through October 11.

In worship this fall, we will celebrate the global, ecumenical Season of Creation with its theme “Living Water.” Our readings will be from Ezekiel 47:1–12, Psalm 1:1–3, Revelation 22:1–5 and John 4:10–14. We will combine waters from our favorite lakes and rivers, so if you are visiting a faraway cabin or retreat, please bring a little bottle of water home. Watch for more details to come.

Press release, August 31, 2026:

St Paul's UCC Welcomes New Pastor

A few blocks off the busy highway, on Bridge Street west from downtown, a white-steepled place of peace has stood for 147 years. With a long history of uniting (rather than splitting) denominations, St. Paul's United Church of Christ brings together a lively congregation of folks from many spiritual backgrounds.

This welcome includes a new pastor, the Rev. Karen R. Larson, who feels the love. "This church looks right past all the labels and welcomes everyone. Even me, a Presbyterian!" Larson, who lives in Minneapolis, hails originally from a dairy farm near Owatonna, and has served churches in downtown Minneapolis, central Nebraska, and rural West Concord, Minnesota.

"We're not a big church," she says of St. Paul's, "but we are full of life. Nowhere have I met a small group of people with so much energy."

Two big Sundays are coming up soon, she said, extending a special invitation to the general public. On September 13 and 20, members of the congregation will witness to their faith as they expound on the lines of the big, colorful "Be The Church" signs outside church doors. Services are at 9:15 every Sunday morning.

Also, on September 20, at 3:00 pm, there will be a special, short Service of Installation for the new pastor, and all are invited.

St. Paul's believes it has something fresh to offer the community. "So often, people come to us from a place of being rejected or wounded by church," says Larson. "We're committed to what we call 'an extravagant welcome,' offering a place and a people to call home, no matter where someone is on their spiritual journey."

Member Joyce Specht agrees. "We felt welcomed the first time we walked in the door six years ago," she says. "We've felt love and acceptance every time since."

Eleven years ago, the church covenanted to be open to and affirming of 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," quoting from a formal statement approved by the congregation.

The two primary commandments of Jesus are consistently offered as the operating instructions for St. Paul's: "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself."

"I grew up in a church where the leadership seemed far more focused on the negative and on judgments and I had given up on attending church," says member Chris Brazelton. "To have found one in my community with a focus on love and understanding of Christ's messages is an incredible joy."

The congregation will dig deeper into what it means to live out that love at the special services on September 13 and 20, starting with the words of the big rainbow sign. "The main reason my wife and I attended our very first service was that sign," says member Mike Hagerty. His wife Vicki added, "The sign outside captured our attention, and the people inside captured our hearts." The words on the 4-ft by 8-ft sign include lines like "Protect the Environment," "Care for the Poor," and "Forgive Often."

The new pastor seems to fit right in. Mike Hagerty went on, "I am thrilled with our new Pastor. She has a true gift for preaching. I always feel like she is speaking directly to me. I understand others feel the same."

St Paul's United Church of Christ is at 201 Buffalo St, Delano.

A letter from Teamwork Africa to the church:

Thank you for your faithful support of Fanta Keita, Pauline Pewee, and Angel Johnson. Fanta was in 10th grade at Nowai Larteh School last year. Her parents are separated and she lives with her mother. Pauline was in 11th grade at GKA. She lives with her mother and her father works for the Liberia National Police. Angel was in 11th grade at GKA. She lives with her mother. Thank you so much for your support. Fanta, Pauline, and Angel are able to attend school because of sponsors like you. We truly appreciate you. You help us make a difference for kids in Liberia.

It matters to one,
Angela Roloson, Starfish Kids coordinator
Peggy Halvorsen, Executive director



St. Paul's UCC Church

Indonesian Cookbook



Recipes from Cliff and Joyce Specht's Travels

Cultural Responsive Dinner

Saturday, September 12, 2026

5:00pm Fellowship Hall

Bring your friends, neighbors, and relatives

Church members will make a recipe to share, new comers can just come and enjoy sampling many foods or make a small donation for kitchen supplies.

**Copies of the recipes
will be provided
upon request.**

**Next Cultural
Responsive Dinner
will be sometime in
November on Spain.
We will keep you
posted!**



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