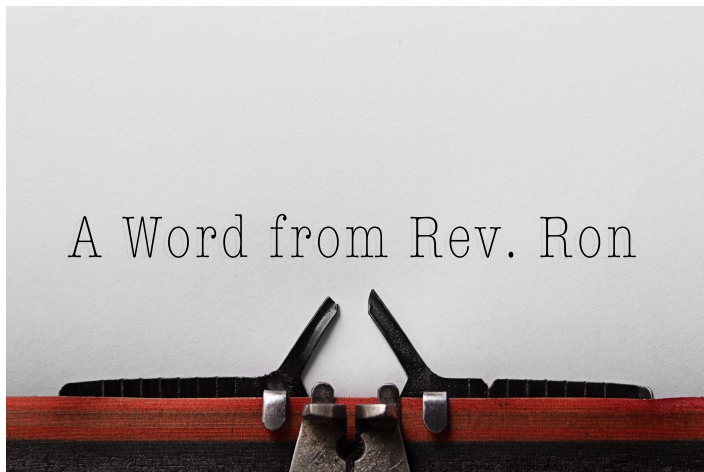




JUNE/JULY, 2025

# The Epistle

A newsletter for the community of  
St. Paul's United Methodist Church



## *Second Act(s)*

Maybe it is because I turned 50 last month. Maybe it is because our eldest is graduating high school next week and soon to move on to what's next.\* Maybe it is learning that the pastor who baptized me in southern California, the Rev. Ed McRae, was one of 28 Methodist clergy who were so convicted about the evils of the racism in the church in their home state of Mississippi that they had to leave and start over somewhere new. Maybe it's the lingering influence of a life of Biblical study.

Whatever the igniting spark, I have been thinking about "Second Acts" this week. There are so many examples of them that come to mind from our Scriptural and historical heritage as United Methodist Christians. Consider just a few:

- Abram and Sarai in their advanced age, well beyond the years of child rearing, not only have children but become the start of great nations. (Genesis 15, 21)
- Moses, who once killed a man and fled from his people's community in Egypt, returns to lead the people to freedom. (Exodus 2, 4)
- Mary, witnessing the death of her son, is shown compassion as he asks his disciple John to take her as his mother and care for her, which we are told he did from that day forward. (John 19)

\*Will plans to attend Florida Southern College, in Lakeland, Florida, to pursue a future in marine biology, for anyone who is wondering.

*We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance. -Harrison Ford*

- John Wesley, 35 years old at the time and an established priest in the Anglican Church, has his heart "strangely warmed" at a Bible Study at Aldersgate Street and the tenor, tone, and direction of his ministry change radically, leading to the formation and continuation of the people called Methodist.

Many of you get to experience the possibility of a second act. I know many of you have been retired for years, and others amongst us are just making the choice or moving in to that phase of life. Rev. Adam Hamilton once shared that retirement is a blessing that wasn't known in most previous generations of the church, and that like Abraham before us, we are blessed in order to bless others. Retirement is a modern gift that allows us a second (or third, or fourth) act, a time we can reinvent and reinvest ourselves to serve God in new ways and make a positive impact.

And, ultimately, any and every day allows every one of us an opportunity for a second act, to start anew. As St. Benedict wrote into the Benedictine order's way of life: "Always, we begin again." When I was younger and sitting in the pews the pastor of our church, the Rev. Dr. Bert Lewis very often declared something similar at the start of worship: "today is the first day of the rest of your life!"

*Always, we  
begin again!*

I think a hard truth to see is that many of our existing congregations are facing a second act. What we have been, what we have done, is now all prologue to what will come next. Only, what's next isn't always clear. So for good and ill we look to leaders to help show us the way.

Tod Bolsinger writes of the role of leaders in days of uncertainty. In his work *Canoeing the Mountains* he shares how Lewis and Clark and their Corps of Discovery Expedition metaphorically illustrates modern leadership. At first Lewis and Clark's great technical skill in canoeing led them far on their journey; but then they had to adapt to the challenges of mountainous terrain. Thankfully, by that point the corps had travelled far enough together that they trusted their leaders, and they successfully found their way to the Pacific Ocean (even if not by canoe).

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Many of us, from clergy to committee chairs to worship leaders, who have taken on roles of leadership within the church take our role seriously and seek to learn and grow. And there is a lot of advice and learning out there for leaders to turn to.

This past month I was struck by some of what I read in Lewis A Parks and Bruce C Birch's book, *Ducking Spears, Dancing Madly: A Biblical Model of Church Leadership*. Early on in the text I was both inspired and challenged by the authors' central assertions that:

church leadership... is the most crucial factor in the reform or revival of the church today... [and] the way we talk about church leadership today, the language that we borrow, the sources that we quote, even the logic that we follow leaves a lot to be desired. We have grown too comfortable with a brand of church leadership that has little to do with either the church's scriptures or the church's theology. And we have not engaged the best thinking in leadership studies from other fields. It is time for students of church leadership to begin drinking the water from their own wells and, thus revived, to engage secular leadership studies with the confidence of those able to maintain their integrity in the exchange (8).

They go on to share that those in the church studying leadership

should exercise respect for the church's sacred scriptures (20)..., take into account the church's theology in general and its theology of the church (ecclesiology) in particular (21)..., [and] involve the courage to attempt a robust correlation of scripture and theology with the best thinking in secular leadership studies(22).

Like other texts I've read recently, the book centers around biblical figures and leadership principles that can be learnt and practiced. Unlike the other books, they made a strong case for the role of the "spiritual" in our "spiritual leaders." In discussing David, for example, the authors share that

the secret of leadership is a robust intimacy with God. Traits and situations count, but they are not the overriding factor (109)

Obviously, anyone familiar with David's story knows that his leadership is paradoxical: while he is held as a great exemplar by the Israelites of what a leader should be, he was also involved in a spectacularly immoral affair and coverup. The authors don't ignore this, pointing out that when at his worst, "[David] loses touch with that intimate relationship with God and trusts in his own authority and power," getting into serious trouble (111). But at his best, "David is a leader called by God who saw clearly that his leadership centered in an unreserved openness to God's presence and power in his life" (111).

I am inspired by the text (and will share more from it during worship services in July), as it reminds me of the greatest ground of hope we have for the second acts that may be before us, individually or collectively. First as disciples of Jesus Christ, and then as those called to leadership in different ways within Christ's body the Church, the greatest well we have to drink from to learn, grow, and face the challenges before us is readily available: our ever present God. Like the biblical figures of historical import or pastors of great conviction who came before us, we can each seek God through worship and prayer, through piety and service, through contemplation and action. However we encounter the divine, the spark of God can motivate us to face whatever challenges we may face in our second acts, centered in Jesus.

Wherever you are in your journey, I hope you'll join me in seeking the presence and power of the divine to guide us in facing the next act before us.

See you in Church!



ST PAUL'S

## Summer Worship Schedule:

During the summer we will have two services: a Traditional service at 8:30am and a Contemporary service at 10:00am. This is a great chance to join together in fellowship and worship with others you may not see that often during your "normal" hour of attendance! This schedule will be maintained for the months of June and July.



ST PAUL'S

## Recognizing Our Graduates

We are so proud of our church's 2025 graduates! Amongst our members and extended families the following were shared with us:

High School Graduates: Will Bartlow, Vaida Knepp, and Jesse Smith.

Other Graduates: McKenna Carroll, degree in nursing; Luis Ortiz Erazo, Master's degree.

On Sunday, May 18, Rev. Ron presented each of those in attendance with a Parker pen as a small token of our congratulations and well-wishes. Since 1933 the logo of the Parker Pen company has been an arrow. We invite our grads to aim high. In addition, in the Scriptures the word used for "sin" is often an archery term that means "to miss the mark." We remind all our graduates that whatever you aim for, if you fall short, don't despair. Not only is Jesus with you to forgive and renew, but the people of St. Paul's UMC are behind you, cheering you on.

# CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

**Our last Sunday School for the school year is Sunday, May 25th.**

Thank you teachers for a wonderful year! Enjoy your break! **YOU** make a difference in the hearts of the families of St. Paul's!



**We need people with a heart for Jesus and children!**

We are starting a new curriculum in the fall (see below) and are looking for some new teachers to add in to our Sunday school rotation. Each Sunday's lesson is compiled for leaders to teach from their strengths and intentionally developed to reach the heart of every child. We are looking for people to serve with 3-5 year-olds, kindergarten - 2nd graders, and 3rd-5th graders. Leader training will be in July. Talk to Heather to discover how **YOU** can grow the kingdom of God!

**Family  
Worship  
Service**



**Save the date  
for our next  
Family Worship  
Service  
Sunday, June  
29th at 9:30 am**

## THANK YOU

to all the women who attended the Mother-Daughter Tea and made it a huge success, especially those who helped with set up, clean up & food!



Come join us for our new, interactive & hands-on adventure!  
**Sunday School will begin  
Sunday, July 27th**



Save the date for  
**Family Game Night**  
Friday, 20th from 5-9 pm  
in the Life Center



Contact Heather Stein for information on Children and Family Ministries or any events on this page. 520-296-6149 or [FamilyMinistries@StPaulsUMCTucson.net](mailto:FamilyMinistries@StPaulsUMCTucson.net)





# Shared Youth Ministry: [Belong - Believe - Serve](#)

## [May events:](#) *Here's a quick look at what we experienced together.*

- **April 27 – Highland Vista Park Pool Party:** Our youth enjoyed swimming, playing volleyball, trying diving board jumps, and relaxing with snacks at Highland Vista Park, thanks to Christ Church UM members who helped make this fun afternoon possible.
- **May 4** - We had a blast at the Trampoline Park—bouncing, climbing, and playing games like “Would You Rather” to learn more about each other.
- **May 11 and 18:** We celebrated the confirmation of five youth from all three churches, including a baptism and a high school graduation. Thank you for supporting and encouraging them in their faith journey.
- **May 18:** We visited Jene at Fellowship Square for the third time, and he truly appreciated our time together. We played a fun “Would You Rather” game and talked to learn more about his life and stories—we plan to visit again in two months.



## [Upcoming events:](#) While we are not meeting weekly in June and July, we are still planning some special events we would love your youth to be part of!

- **May 25:** We'll gather at Desert Skies for a fun end-of-year cooking party with food, games, and time to celebrate graduations and say goodbye to some of our youth.
- **From May 30 to June 1,** we'll head to Rose Canyon for a 24-hour camping trip with youth, families, and volunteers—including optional bouldering, group cooking, reflection time, a peaceful hike by the lake, and a chance to see the Milky Way and stars through a telescope.
- **We will be joining St. Paul's Family Ministries** for a fun Family Game Night on June 20 from 5–9 PM, with board games, gym games, snacks, and time for all ages to enjoy together!
- **July:** We will have a break the first few Sundays of July and then join other church service projects, including a **School Supply Drive and a Peanut Butter Drive.**
- **New Youth Welcome:** Is your child going into sixth grade this upcoming school year? Or do you know someone who is? If so, please let me know—I would love to meet in person to discuss expectations and ways to get involved. **Please reach out to Luis Ortiz at [youthdirector@tucsonumcyouth.com](mailto:youthdirector@tucsonumcyouth.com)**

# School Supply Drive

St. Paul's has been collecting school supplies for the last 24 years for our three partner schools and we will continue to do so this year. **Beginning on July 13th**, there will be a collection box in the Narthex for school supplies collection. We will finish our collection on Aug. 3rd. We will deliver to Henry Elementary School and Dietz K8 Elementary School in Tucson and to Robles Elementary at Three Points on August 5th. The principals and liaisons at each school are so grateful for all that our congregation does for their students and families.

If you chose, you can order through Amazon and have some school supplies sent to St. Paul's or make a financial donation if you prefer. Thank you for caring for our school families and any church family that might need supplies. Any questions can be directed to Genita Salvagio 520-404-2123 and Cheryl Smith 520-205-1667. Thank you again.

## School Supply List

Copier Paper

Filler Paper

Wide Rule and College Rule Paper

2 pocket folders, including the ones with brads

#2 Ticonderoga Pencils

Pencil Topper Erasers

Pink Erasers

Spiral Notebooks: Wide Rule and College Rule

Composition Notebooks: Wide Rule and College Rule

Mechanical Pencils

Chisel Tip Dry Erase Markers

Black and Blue Pens

Highlighters

Regular and Fine Tip Black Sharpies

Glue Sticks (no bottle please)

Colored Pencils

Colored Markers: both fine tip and broad tip

Rulers

Scissors: Adult and Kids

Backpacks

Disinfecting Wipes

Hand Sanitizer

Kleenex



# Annual Conference Mission Project 2025



## AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME

JEREMIAH 17:14 | PSALM 51:10

Annual Conference 2025 is coming in June and there are some big items on the docket for our conference to vote on.

But first, a refresher on the organization of the United Methodist Church (UMC). Going from the bottom up, we have the local church>district>annual conference>jurisdiction>General Conference. So for us here at St. Paul's UMC, it looks something like this:

St. Paul's UMC



South District



Desert Southwest Annual Conference



Western Jurisdiction



General Conference

Each year, our conference hosts an Annual Conference and this year it will be held in Las Vegas, NV, which is in the North District of our conference. At our last church conference, we elected Lauren Danloe and Dave Beeson as our delegates to Annual Conference. Rev. Ron will also be attending as a clergy member and Megan Swanson will be attending as a conference committee chair. More updates will come after Annual Conference, but if you want to know more about the upcoming conference, you can check out the webpage here: <https://dscumc.org/annual-conference/>

The 2025 Mission Project Team is generating incredible energy and support as we rally around filling the shelves of our local church food banks in the North District. Online donations are already coming in, and churches are showing the Mission Project videos in worship and posting them to their websites and e-newsletters. Momentum is growing as people across the Desert Southwest Conference step forward to respond with generosity and faith.

This year's Mission Project comes at a critical time. Across the country, food banks are facing significant funding reductions, while the number of people experiencing food insecurity continues to rise. With fewer resources and higher demand, many food banks struggle to keep up, and local food banks feel the most severe pressure. When funding is cut, the ability to purchase nutritious food, especially from local producers, diminishes, leaving communities more vulnerable.

That's why the 2025 Annual Conference Mission Project matters so much. Our local church food banks in the North District are serving as vital lifelines for people in struggling communities. These ministries provide dependable access to food in areas that have recently become "food deserts." They are a beacon of hope and a testimony to the church's commitment to compassion and justice.

By giving online and promoting the project in your church, you and your congregation can make a tangible difference in whether someone goes to bed hungry.

If you haven't already, won't you and your church join the others who are making a difference? Support the 2025 Annual Conference Mission Project today and join us in building A Healthy Church for a Healthy World.

Find resources to promote the 2025 Mission Project at [dscumc.org/mission-project](https://dscumc.org/mission-project).

# Summer Birthdays!

## June Birthdays

Cheryl Smith 06/01  
Kathryn Kait 06/02  
Pat Orzech 06/03  
Sharon Heemeier 06/04  
Kristin Rhodes 06/05  
Lory Flanders 06/07  
Lynn Gardner 06/10  
Barbara Baitzer 06/11  
Pat Vreeland 06/16  
Marsha Kwolek 06/17  
Don Hunt 06/19  
Michelle Magdanz 06/19  
Wayne Nelson 06/20  
Vanessa Dolce 06/22  
Victoria Gonzalez 06/23  
Frank Wight 06/24  
June Matthews 06/24  
Phil Bentley 06/25  
Pat Everett 06/26  
Robert Armstrong 06/28

## July Birthdays

Al Downs 07/04  
Megan Swanson 07/04  
Jackson Schow 07/06  
Aspen Danloe 07/06  
Dan Pine 07/07  
Sandy Mein 07/07  
Lou Nash 07/08  
Feza Mto 07/08  
Kaylin Roney 07/08  
Ruth Ann Lynn 07/11  
Leslie Daniels 07/14  
Sherrill Warrick 07/17  
Takele Bracey 07/17  
Steve Hargis 07/21  
Mike Smith 07/21  
John Kellerman 07/23  
Donna Huebl 07/25  
Merv Cannon 07/26  
Kevin Harcourt 07/26  
Kate Bartlow 07/26  
Faith Wagner 07/29  
Beth Bryant 07/29





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## **Summer Worship**

**Summer worship times start on June 1 with a traditional service at 8:30 am and a contemporary service at 10:00 am. Summer worship will continue through July 27 and we will return to 3 worship services in August.**

**Have a wonderful summer!**