



Pastor's Corner - August 2026

Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul's UMC,

There is a lot to celebrate at St. Paul's right now—and I am excited to share a few highlights with you.

This past spring, the Columbia District Church Extension Society (CDCES) awarded St. Paul's a \$12,000 grant. The funds will be divided equally between two important efforts: our work around affordable housing solutions and the launch of a 12-month pastoral residency program.

Last Sunday, St. Paul's SPRC interviewed and hired Claire "Ciara" Wilde to serve in this new pastoral residency role. Many of you already know Ciara as our church administrator, a part-time position she began in mid-June. It didn't take long for us to discover that her gifts go far beyond her spectacular administrative skills.

Ciara is a proven leader and educator, a fluent Spanish speaker, and—most importantly—someone with a heart for God and for our community. She is also currently discerning a call to vocational ministry, which makes this residency a meaningful next step for her and a wonderful opportunity for St. Paul's.

Over the next year, Ciara will minister to us and alongside us through preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and other opportunities shaped by both the needs of our congregation and her passions and gifts for ministry. In short: this is good news for all of us. Please take a moment to introduce yourself to Ciara when you see her!

Coming Soon

Safe Sanctuary Sunday: In September, we will hold Safe Sanctuary Sunday and announce upcoming times for Safe Sanctuary training. Stay tuned for details.

Book Study: Join us for *Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible* by Debbie Blue beginning Monday, September 14, from 1:30 to 3:00 PM in St. Paul's Church Library, or from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the home of Mike and Bonnie Smiley. To sign up and order a book, please contact Judy Huey, Mike Smiley, or Pastor Kamron.

September Sermon Series — *I've Been Meaning to Ask*: Beginning the second week of September, we will explore questions that invite honesty, connection, and care. September 13: "Where Are You From?" September 20: "What is Your Name?" September 27: "Where Does It Hurt?" October 4: "What Do You Need?" October 11: "Where Do We Go from Here?"

I am looking forward to a season of deeper community building, getting to know our ministry partners better, and discovering new ways we can grow together in faith and service.

I recently bought a t-shirt that says, "Introverted but Willing to Discuss Dismantling Systems of Oppression," which, I think, describes me quite well. I may not always be the best at small talk, but I am a good listener, and I genuinely want to keep getting to know each of you and your stories, your hopes, your questions, and the things that matter most to our congregation and our community. If you would like to sit down for coffee, lunch, or just a time to talk, please let me know. I would be grateful for the chance to listen, learn, and share a few unhurried minutes together.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Kamron



8/06 Linda Cook
8/16 Lois Spitze
8/20 Ervin Miller
8/21 Kyle Kroker
8/22 Wendell Baskins
8/29 Kristin Cook
8/29 George Huszti
8/30 Melody Ghormley

Touching Bases

A Note from Your Housing Team

Your housing team had a good meeting that went far afield and covered a wide variety of bases. Keeping that time honored tradition of baseball, here is a recap of our meeting from August 5th.

First base was a discussion about the variety of ways the St. Paul's space is shared, which includes this diversity of church and community organizations: AA, IMAC, Linwood Neighborhood Association, quilters, Storyline, and Sunday school. It is impressive to see how these groups intertwine, interact, and coexist at St. Paul's.

Second base was a reminiscence about the journey of housing at St. Paul's thus far. It has been dominated with learning, congregational meetings with meaningful interactions, a few bumps, and many in-depth respectful conversations on housing.

Third base was a discussion of the exploration process that has taken place around the idea of the possibility of sharing our facility.

And having rounded third, we are headed home. Because of the continuing discussion on third base, sharing our facility, your housing team will be extending our pause which started in June. We intend to pursue our housing research in January 2027.

Your housing team: Linda Cook, Rev. Kamron Furlow Harkness, Ervin Miller, Bonnie and Mike Smiley, and Dave Smith.

A Note from the Office

Hello wonderful St. Paul's community,

Just a quick note to say thank you so much for being so welcoming, *and* for your patience as I get the hang of things (Scout left some big shoes to fill!) I know a few pieces were missing from the July Epistle, and I hope they're covered here, but please let me know if there are items that are still absent. Also, please let me know if you have comments (positive or negative!) about this new format (i.e. rather than linking to a separate Epistle document, we're experimenting with including Epistle content in the main body of the newsletter.) I always welcome feedback, and I look forward to getting know more and more of you over the coming weeks and months. I'm typically in the office on Wednesday and/or Thursday, so please let me know if you'd like to schedule a time to connect, either before or after the pastoral residency begins!

With gratitude,

Ciara (Claire) Wilde
Administrative Assistant

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 16 Adult Education @10am Worship @11am AA @8:15pm	17	18 AA @12:30pm	19 Prayers and Squares @12pm	20	21 Al-anon @6pm	22 Chapter CW - PEO Trunk Sale @8am
23 Adult Education @10am Worship @11am AA @8:15pm	24	25 AA @12:30pm Trustees meeting @6:30pm	26 Fellowship Hall in use all day Prayers and Squares @12pm	27 Fellowship Hall in use all day	28 Al-anon @6pm	29

30 Adult Education @10am Worship @11am AA @8:15pm	31 SE Portland Youth Collective Volunteer Training @6pm	Sept. 1 AA @12:30pm	2 Prayers and Squares @12pm	3	4 Al-anon @6pm	5 Linwood NDA Block Party!
6 Sunday morning adult education @10am Worship @11am SE Portland Youth Collective @3pm AA @8:15pm	7 Monday Small Group @7pm	8 Lunch bunch @11:30am AA @12:30pm Governance Meeting @4pm	9 Prayers and Squares @12pm	10 Linwood NDA Meeting @7pm	11 Al-anon @6pm	12

Announcements

After School Snacks Neighborhood children are going back to school soon. Let's help them by donating AFTER SCHOOL SNACKS in August and September. Place your donations in the baskets in John Wesley Hall. Wichita Center for Family and Community will distribute them.

Sundays @ 10:00 AM Adult Christian Ed class, before Worship, in the Church Library. All are welcome! Contact Sue Sayers (503-659-2823)

The Monday Small Group meets at the Smiley's home at 7:00 PM. Contact Mike Smiley at 503-653-1772 with any questions you have.

Second Tuesday of each month:

@ 4:00 PM: Governance Board meeting on zoom

<https://greaternw.zoom.us/j/91117246994>

Wednesday @ 12:00-3:00 PM Prayers and Squares Quilt Group in Room 4. Contact Judy Huey (503-659-1805)

Wednesday @ 7:00 PM. Choir is on hiatus for the summer. Watch for a start up date in September. Contact Linda Cook (503-407-5182)

Do You Have a PRAYER REQUEST? Please contact the Church office at 503-654-1705 or email office@stpaulsumc.us.

Pastor Kamron contact info: (205) 587-1225 (you can text!).
kamronfurlow@gmail.com.