



THE ANCHOR

A publication of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Williamsburg, Iowa

No.2 February 2026

Grace and peace to you,

As I sat down to write this month's newsletter, looking ahead to February, it dawned on me the significance of "firsts", and I was reminded, "I have just concluded my first 30 days!" This time of the year, it is easy to get lost in the anticipation, expectation and consternation of all that begins to unfold. As a church, we have Ash Wednesday, confirmation class, baptisms, new member classes, Lent, a Lenten study, the strong desire for warming conditions of Spring—and yes, Holy Week. But wait, I don't want to look forward too quickly and not honor what has already taken place in this first month.

I've heard it stated that the past are the memories we hold in the present. Therefore, unlike Rafiki's claiming to Simba in The Lion King, "why worry about the past, it's in the past," we should instead embrace the past for it

too shapes who we are. I offer this thought to you because the first 30 days here at SPUMC have been packed with rich experiences throughout this loving congregation bearing witness to this wonderful community.

My first services in your pulpit have been times of seeing your hearts and feeling your hunger and thirst. My first times with your youth groups have been refreshing and energizing with the visions of a fulfilling future in their voices. My first meetings with the Board and committees have evidenced a passionate and experienced leadership maintaining the foundation for this Body of Christ. Home visits, small group gatherings, Bible studies, chapel service, and individual meetings in my office all bear witness to this church's sustaining legacy. I've also continued to sense from you a longing for some to let down your load, and for others the joyfulness to be part of a new vision.

May we be so bold, together, as to stand firm and tall on this firm foundation, God's firm foundation, from which we will continue to strive to be a church of seeing, experiencing and embracing Christ.

How can I help you?

Pastor James

pastor@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com



*Jesus said, "Peace be with you!
As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." John 20:21*

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

L.O.V.E

February is generally known as the month of love. The major influence of this is, of course, Valentine's Day sitting in middle of it. The month also comes as winter presses deeper into our psyche and we need encouragement, warmth, and love to hold hope. This month each sermon will attend to LOVE as an acronym, looking at four ways our God evidences and teaches us to truly love well.



February 1st: L is for Listen. Our ears are a primary route to our heart, and they are more importantly the active agent in how we love others.

February 8th: O is for Offer. No greater love has one shown than to lay down his life for another.

February 15th: V is for Value. Worthiness is a key desire each person holds, establishing it is a two-way road that takes effort to maintain.

February 22nd: E is for Emote. How will they know us? By our love, by our love, which requires us to express our feelings...there are many ways.

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Tuesdays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Wednesdays

By Appointment

Thursdays

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Fridays

By Appointment

January Attendance

11/4 - 131 1/11 - 114

1/18 - 97 1/25 - 113

Prayer requests can be emailed to
office@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com

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Deadline for news for next month's
newsletter is the 20th of the month.



The Lenten journey may seem overly familiar. Indeed, we have been here before. There is comfort in the familiar. Many of the rituals and practices of this season are comfortable. They give us a sense of place, like being home again. This can be a good starting place for the season, an invitation to walk the paths we have walked before. We encourage the community to gather once again. Yet, the Lenten journey and our discipleship path encourage us to grow, to go deeper, to climb higher, to reach further than we may have before. Lent is a time of introspection, but also a call to action as we seek to be the pilgrim people of God, seeking and shaping God's kingdom. Taken from Discipleship Ministries—The United Methodist Church, 2026.

This Lent, Pastor James and the SPUMC Board invite you to participate in a cornerstone moment, a Lenten journey that fulfills key goals for our 2026 Ministry Action Plan. Each Wednesday following Ash Wednesday through Holy Week, come and participate in a small group discussion study. Gather with us at 5:30 pm for a meal and then stay to discuss the week's focus topic. Experience the renewal that comes from God's never-ending mercy and then walk with others from our community and our Lord along a journey toward new (renewed) life. For more information and to RSVP your interest, please email Pastor James (pastor@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com). No preparation is necessary, bring your favorite Bible.

The dates and topics will be:

- February 25—A Clean Heart
- March 4—Mercy On the Wilderness Road
- March 11—Guided by the Promise
- March 18—Companion for the Journey
- March 25—Journeying In Grace
- April 1—Redemption Road

**STAY
CONNECTED**

www.stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com
Facebook - @STPAULSUMC803
<https://www.youtube.com/c/stpaulsumcwborg>





SPUMC New Member Orientation Class

Have you been considering moving more deeply into this church family? Have you been attending our worship for a time but either haven't been invited or haven't stopped to consider what membership here means? Do you have curiosities and questions about the United Methodist Church in general? Are you new to this community or returning after a time away and wanting to complete the final stages of your move? These are all great reasons to attend the upcoming new member class.

Beginning Sunday, April 19th, pastor will conduct a new member orientation class series on becoming a Methodist. The class will meet the alternating Sundays of 4/19, 5/03 and 5/17, from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm.

The discussion will focus on Who Are Methodists, Who Is the Church, and Our Calling and Responsibility. This class will then be encouraged to remain a covenant group sharing the journey of faith over the foreseeable future, working with Pastor, to maintain the Wesleyan tradition of watching over one another in Christian love. New members will join the church during a worship service on June 7th, choosing the worship time of their preference. For more information or to RSVP your interest and participation, email Pastor James at pastor@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com.



The N.O.W. committee and Pastor James are excited to introduce the start of the next confirmation journey for young persons from 6th to 9th grade. An introductory session was offered on January 25th where families got to see the vision for Pastor James' first confirmation course. Using the CONFIRM curriculum offered by Cokesbury as a framework, this journey will help students grow in faith by developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and learning the value of community while bearing witness to one another. Confirmation develops knowledge of the church, the community of faith and in the articulation of a growing personal faith. We learn some of the important tools and practices for living life as disciples of Jesus Christ through our Church tradition.

Confirmands will have a journey beginning February 15th through April 2027 with a confirmation date in May 2027. The journey of Confirmation builds deep relationships, confidence, and trust. This class will enjoy retreat together by traveling to Dubuque, Iowa for a rich experience of worship in different settings amid the theme of "The Living Water Calls Our Faith." Members of SPUMC are encouraged to respond with a "yes" if you are approached by a student seeking a mentor.

If you have a student in this age range who has not yet been invited, please email the church office (office@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com) to be added to the communication list and important next steps.

Financial Report

CURRENT HILLS BANK BALANCE AS OF January 27, 2026

\$191,516.05 which includes the following breakdown:

- \$84,954.37 General Fund from Offerings
- \$49,357.76 Capital Improvements account
- \$16,708.70 in designated amounts such as missions, scholarships, etc.
- \$6,254.25 Memorial Fund account
- \$50,949.67 6-month CD which matures in May 2026

This leaves \$68,245.67

Edward Jones, Williamsburg Summary

Funds to be invested - \$41,582.33

YEAR TO DATE SUMMARY - 1/1/26 to 1/27/26

(4 weeks)

- Total offering given to the General Fund received YTD: \$27,250.96 (\$6,813.00 average weekly offering)
- Total Capital Improvement offering YTD: \$840 (\$210 average weekly offering)
- Total Interest Income YTD: \$736.15
- Total expenses paid YTD: \$23,080.25 (\$5,770.00 average weekly expenses)

Iowa Methodist Foundation Fund

(From Marilyn Tanner Memorial) as of 12/31/25
Balance \$104,372.00 (\$100,000 of this money is designated by the family for a future sanctuary)



EPIC Meals

February 4th SPUMY

- Pizza, Lettuce, Ice Cream
- Wear your team's Super Bowl colors!

February 11th SPUMY

- Chicken & Noodles, green beans, poke cake
- Wear NASCAR apparel

February 18th SPUMY

- Ash Wednesday soup supper
- No youth group
- Ash Wednesday Service led by SPUMY

February 25th EPIC Jr. & SPUMY

- Hot dogs, chili dogs, chips, green beans, lettuce salad, ice cream

Week after week, Wednesday night offers the body of Christ here at SPUMC a chance to gather for meal and participate in Christian witness and intergenerational community. Youth education is the core activity each week, and a yummy meal is served. We often have extras available for our homebound community and those who could use a pick-me-up and would like the opportunity to distribute them where needed or helpful.

Are you in need of nourishment? Could you use a word and bite of encouragement from your church family? Contact the Church Office at 319-668-2288 or email us at office@stpaulsumcwilliamsburg.com [JRB1] and let us know how many meals you could use. We have a supply ready for distribution that Pastor James and several of our laity care servants would cherish the opportunity to bring to you.



Please join

Haven Nunnelley

for a Concert Fundraiser March 1st at 1PM

at St. Paul's United Methodist Church

If you'd like to support **one dedicated singer** and **two unforgettable musical journeys**, you're invited to join us for an afternoon of music. This concert is a **freewill offering**, all donations will go directly toward supporting Haven's upcoming tours at Carnegie Hall in New York and in Germany, Spain, & Morocco.



2nd Year Music Education Major
at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa
2024 Graduate of
Williamsburg High School

Can't Attend, but still want to support? Venmo: @hnunnelley4



WINTER WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Since Winter has decided to stick around, here are some reminders on St. Paul's Weather Cancellation Policy:

- School starts late - morning church activities cancelled
- School cancels or lets out early - all church activities cancelled
- Check KCRG, Channel 9 & their website for Sunday cancellations
- Church service cancellation announcements will be posted to Facebook and emailed to those receiving the Weekly Update



SPUMC Children & Family Ministries

JOYFULLY GROWING IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST

February 2026



For Pre-K through 4th Grade

☀ Sunday School: Extra-Ordinary ☀

Our Sunday School kids (Pre-K through 3rd grade) are beginning a new 4-week series called Extra-Ordinary! Through stories from Jesus' early life and ministry, kids will discover how Jesus turns ordinary moments into something amazing and learn that He is one of a kind, humble, trusting in God, and calls us to follow Him.

While inventors use tools and plans, Jesus simply uses His love and power to transform lives — including ours.

Join us for faith, fun, and growing together!

🕒 Sundays | 8:45–9:45 AM | Children's Crossing

☀ Children's Church ☀

During our 10 AM service, we love offering Children's Church for our youngest friends (birth through 1st grade) — a safe, joyful place where little ones can learn about God's love at their level.

To keep this ministry strong and available each week, we're looking for a few more Helping Hands. The commitment is simple and very low — but the impact is huge!

Interested in serving?

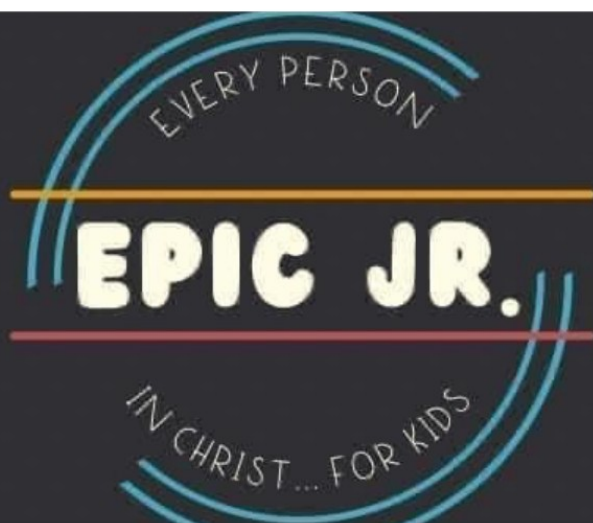
Chat with Sarah Lentz or email

SPUMC.Childrens.Ministry@gmail.com to learn more.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH

FOR INFANTS-1ST GRADE



☀ Epic Jr. ☀

Epic Jr., our after-school program, returns in February on Feb. 11 and Feb. 25! We're so excited to gather again as kids learn, grow, and discover just how great God's love is for them.

Thank you to the many volunteers who've already stepped up for the spring session — we're so grateful! There are still a few openings if you'd like to help.

Interested? Chat with Kristin Scandridge to get involved.



🔥 SPUMY YOUTH UPDATE 🔥

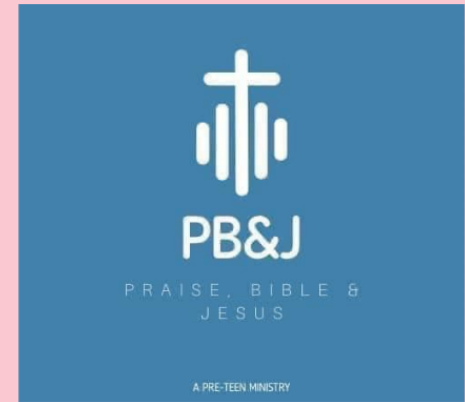
Our SPUMY youth have been busy this winter with lessons, a fun “Meet the Pastor” night, and serving around the church through hands-on service projects.

They’re looking forward to learning about Ash Wednesday and helping lead the Ash Wednesday service with Pastor James, plus participating in the Take Away Hunger service project in early March.

We love seeing their hearts for faith and service in action!

📖 PB&J IS UNBELIEVABLE

Our 4th–6th graders are starting a new 4-week series called Unbelievable, exploring big questions and doubts about faith through the book of John. Students will discover that Jesus welcomes our questions, meets us where we are, and helps us learn to trust God—even when we don’t understand everything. It’s understandable if you have questions about God and the Bible, especially when some things seem unbelievable. But our doubts don’t have to destroy our faith. Bring your questions and let’s learn together!



💬 Youth Meet the Pastor Nights with Pastor James

Over the past month, our youth had the special opportunity to get to know Pastor James a little better during two separate “Meet the Pastor” nights — one with PB&J (grades 4–6) and another with SPUMY (grades 7–12). Splitting into two groups gave each age level time and space to connect in ways that fit their interests and questions.

Students asked everything from his favorite color and dream car to bigger, more personal questions about his family, his faith journey, and what led him to become a pastor. Pastor James shared openly about his story, and since this is his first church appointment while he finishes his classes, it felt especially meaningful to hear about the path that brought him here — and to us. Then on January 28, Pastor James joined our Epic evening, helping lead us in prayer and worship as we closed out the night together. It was a wonderful time of reflection and connection. We’re so grateful for the chance to build these relationships and look forward to continuing to grow in faith together as a church family.

Ash Wednesday

Soup Supper
Fundraiser
5:30 PM

Service
of Ashes
6:30 PM



This Ash Wednesday, a special service for the imposition of ashes is planned by Pastor James and led by SPUMY. Ash Wednesday is often overlooked by protestants as a traditionally Catholic observance. In Genesis 3:19 we read; "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." It is from this statement of God sending Adamah (earth) and Khav-vaw (life), commonly known as Adam and Eve, that we are reconnected with the creation story. Through the imposition of ashes, we are also reminded of our ability to set aside, turn away from, those things in our life that we no longer wish to have dominion over us, such as the very nature of this world. Come, be released and share your witness through the sign of the cross.

A soup supper begins at 5:30 pm and service will take place beginning at 6:30 pm. Proceeds from the supper will support the needs of The Attic ministry here at SPUMC.

St. Paul's United Methodist Church, Williamsburg, Iowa

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