

St. Paul's by-the-Sea

Weekly News and Updates

December 8, 2025

**FREE
COMMUNITY
DINNER**

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 17 5:00-7:00 PM

NO
REQUIREMENTS
TO RECEIVE A
MEAL OR FOOD

**FOOD
& SUPPLIES
GIVE AWAY!**

**ST. PAUL'S BY-THE-SEA
EPISCOPAL CHURCH**
302 N. BALTIMORE AVENUE
OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND



We Need Your Help!

As temperatures drop here in Ocean City, many of our neighbors are facing the winter without safe or warm housing. We are asking our community to step in with compassion and hope.

We are in urgent need of:

Cold-weather tents

Sleeping bags (winter-rated)

Sweat suits (men's and women's sizes)

These simple items can mean the difference between a dangerous night in the cold and a chance for warmth, and safety.

If you're able, please consider donating one of these essential winter items. Your generosity directly supports the most vulnerable among us — those who often have nowhere else to go and no one else to turn to.

Men's Sizes Needed: M,L,XL,2X

Men's Sweatpants:

Amazon Essentials Men's Relaxed Joggers Sweatpants, Fleece, Comfortable Fit
<https://a.co/d/f7cTkh4>

Men's Sweatshirt:

Amazon Essentials Men's Crewneck Sweatshirt, Lightweight Long-Sleeve French Terry (Available in Big & Tall) <https://a.co/d/bmKR5kT>

Women's Sizes needed: M, L, XL, 2X

Women's Sweatpants:

Amazon Essentials Women's Relaxed High Waist Joggers (Available in Plus Size) <https://a.co/d/fYb9Rz3>

Women's Sweatshirt:

Amazon Essentials Women's French Terry Fleece Pullover Hoodie
<https://a.co/d/fVJodkE>

Sleeping Bag:

0 Degree Winter Sleeping Bags for Adults Camping (450GSM) - Temp Range (5F-32F) Portable Waterproof Compression Sack- Camping Sleeping Bags for Big and Tall in Env Hoodie: Backpacking Hiking 4 Season
<https://a.co/d/ckcBraZ>

1 Person Tent:

Limited-time deal: Golabs CT1 2 Person Camping Tent, Easy Set Up in 3 Mins, PU1500mm Waterproof w/Mesh Top & Door with Ventilation, Lightweight 4.4lbs Portable Family Tent with Carry Bag &Interior Storage Pockets &Hook
<https://a.co/d/dApLgh8>

Mart Cobra Emergency Blanket 100-Pack | Reflective Thermal Blanket | Survival Gear | Lightweight Mylar Blankets | Retains 90% Body Heat | Essential for Camping, First Aid, Homeless Care Package Bulk
<https://a.co/d/j66EPu9>

Mail donations to: St. Paul's By-the-Sea 302 N. Baltimore Avenue Ocean City, MD 21842



Advent Tree

In loving memory of Mary Wright, and as a means of preparing for Christ during Advent, we will once again collect warm hats, gloves and scarfs to be distributed throughout the cold weather months..



Bring your donations to church on Sunday and clip them to the branches of the purple Advent tree in the children's area. Let us continue what she started so many years ago by filling all its branches. Clothes pins are on a pedestal next to the tree.

No empty branches please!

On Sunday, December 21st, after the 10am service, we will be decorating the church for the Christmas Eve service. Please consider staying and volunteering in this very joyful tradition called the "Hanging of the Greens." Many hands make light work!



Christmas Eve Mass

Join us on Christmas Eve for a truly special service at 4 pm. This year, we are excited to welcome back violinist Slava Gelfand who, along with our choir, organist Shirley Hailey, and cantor Pat Lehnerd, will fill the sanctuary with beautiful music to mark the birth of Christ.

Slava, will grace us with a solo performance beginning at 3:30 pm. The choir will also perform before the service begins. So, be sure to arrive early as the festive atmosphere will certainly prepare your heart for the service. It will be a night of joy, reflection, and beautiful music you won't want to miss!

If you love to sing and would like to join the choir for this special event, please reach out to Shirley or Pastor Jill. The choir is practicing on Sunday mornings at 8:30 am, and attendance at these rehearsals is mandatory for participation in the Christmas Eve service.

We look forward to celebrating this holy season together with music, fellowship, and the spirit of Christmas. Don't forget to arrive early! See you there!

Community Christmas Day Dinner

This year, we will continue the mission of food and fellowship on Christmas Day, 11am - 1pm in the hall. All are welcome! This will be a safe, loving place to gather whether you are hungry for food or companionship. Our dinner unites a diverse community – from those who are in need of a meal, to our homeless brothers and sisters, to those who find themselves alone on Christmas Day.



Please check out the fantastic article in "The Roc" December 1st issue about St. Paul's By-the-Sea and our Outreach Ministries. Click the image below to see the full online edition. This article is on page nine.

December 1, 2025

NEWS

ROC Edition | 9

St. Paul's by-the-Sea: Historic church expands its social mission as the needs of Ocean City grow

By Sherrie Clifford
ROC Edition Publisher

Before most of downtown wakes up, the kitchen at St. Paul's by-the-Sea Protestant Episcopal Church is already in motion. Coffee brews, volunteers unload a delivery from the Maryland Food Bank and trays of chicken are prepared for the taco casserole that will be served for lunch. In the Parish Hall, more volunteers set up tables for the steady line of guests who depend on the church for a hot meal, groceries and a moment of safety.

Scenes like this unfold five days a week at St. Paul's by-the-Sea, one of Ocean City's oldest buildings and a parish whose outreach programs have become essential to the community. The church's mission has grown in response to the pressures facing many who live and work in the resort town, including seasonal employment gaps, housing shortages and rising food insecurity.

"Our mission here at St. Paul's by-the-Sea is to feed people today. We want to make sure no one goes away hungry," said the Rev. Jill Williams, the Rector of St. Paul's by-the-Sea Episcopal Church. "What makes us different is we will serve anyone who comes to our door, no matter what. We have no requirements."

The historic church, built in 1900 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, remains an anchor in downtown Ocean City while expanding its mission to meet modern needs. The Carpenter Gothic building stands at 302 N. Baltimore Street and now serves as both a spiritual home and a hub of social outreach rooted in the parish's mission to "Love God, Serve the World."

The church's food outreach began 27 years ago when parishioners prepared simple sandwiches and handed them out to locals in need. What started as an informal act of care has grown into an organized ministry that now feeds between 50 and 60 people a day in the off-season and between 130 and 140 a day in the summer. Guests receive a hot meal, groceries and access to the food pantry, which offers fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, milk, pantry staples and ready-to-eat items. Unlike traditional food programs that distribute prepacked bags, the pantry allows guests to select the items they prefer.

This model restores dignity, reduces waste and meets people's real dietary needs.

The food ministry is coordinated by Director of Outreach Ministries Jill Lake of Ocean Pines. Lake supports and oversees the church's outreach efforts and works closely with volunteers who help operate the daily pantry. Lake also recently organized a salmon and chicken community dinner with a grocery giveaway, an event the church will now host on the third Wednesday of each month. The outreach leadership reflects a growing focus on helping those who struggle not only with food insecurity but with the broader challenges of living and working in a seasonal resort economy.

One of the most urgent issues facing the community is housing instability. In July 2025, Worcester County enacted an ordinance prohibiting anyone from sleeping outside on public property. Individuals who do not meet eligibility requirements for local shelters often have nowhere to go, especially during dangerous weather. Pastor Jill said the congregation is discerning how to respond and the urgency of the situation has become impossible to ignore.

"Over the past several months there have been a few nights that we have chosen to house individuals who had nowhere else to go," Pastor Jill said. "We had a nor'easter and a few nights where the temperatures dipped below freezing with the wind chill. Our clients were not eligible for other shelters, so our volunteers rose to the occasion, prepared a hot meal and let them sleep in the parish hall. It is the core of our faith that compels us to do this."

These emergency actions have encouraged the church to explore a more structured approach for nights when weather or circumstances create immediate danger. Volunteers have prepared sleeping areas, meals and essential supplies in DeWees Hall for times when those without shelter face risk. While the church is not operating as a full-time shelter, St. Paul's by-the-Sea is stepping in when the need is critical and no other options exist.

As outreach continues to expand, so does the need for volunteers, supplies and financial support. The church offers training to new volunteers preparing meals, organizing pantry shelves or helping during community dinners. The program relies on individual donors,



ROC Edition • Sherrie Clifford, Publisher

Volunteers at St. Paul's by-the-Sea prepare warm, fresh meals every weekday for anyone in need. Meals are available to all who come. Pictured above are some of the volunteers who selflessly assist with this effort: JoAnn Warren (middle left), Lindsay Graham (middle right) and Tom DiGirolamo (bottom).

partnerships with the Maryland Food Bank and local businesses willing to contribute food or resources.

Those wishing to support the outreach ministries of St. Paul's by-the-Sea can volunteer, donate food or make financial contributions

to help sustain the pantry, meal service and emergency shelter efforts. The church welcomes new volunteers throughout the year. For more information or to get involved, visit www.stpaulsbythesea.org or email outreach@stpaulsbythesea.org

Merging of Facebook Pages

As we look back with gratitude, we are so thankful that our outreach ministries first began with the Shepherd's Crook Food Pantry. What started as a



ministry to meet only non-perishable food needs has grown into so much more—and we are excited for what God continues to do through our church family.

Because our outreach efforts now extend far beyond the food pantry, we will be closing the Shepherd's Crook Facebook page and sharing all future updates, events, and outreach news on our church's main Facebook page.

☐ Please follow us at:

<https://www.facebook.com/StPaulsByTheSeaEpsicopalChurch>

to stay connected with everything happening in our outreach ministries.

Thank you for your support, your prayers, and your heart for serving our community. We're grateful for where we've been—and even more excited for what's ahead!

[Click Here to view the Parish Calendar](#)



St. Paul's by-the-Sea | 302 N. Baltimore Ave | Ocean City, MD 21842 US

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