

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Sunday, December 24, 2023**  
**Christmas Eve- 10:30am**



**1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922**  
**Pastor:** Rev. Ken McDowell, cell phone: 610-207-4783  
**Church Office Phone:** 570-754-7225  
**Office Hours:** Monday – Thursday 9am–2pm; Closed Friday  
**Church Email:** [summerhillucc@gmail.com](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com)  
**Website:** [www.summerhillucc.com](http://www.summerhillucc.com)  
**Livestream:** [www.facebook.com/summerhillucc](http://www.facebook.com/summerhillucc)

1782  
Sunday, December 24, 2023

241 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

2023  
10:30am

Fourth Sunday of Advent/ Christmas Eve  
Memorial Gift Dedication  
Recognition of Advent Artists

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger  
Organist- Colin Andrew

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer, from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar, **the Birth of Jesus Christ.**

You may place your Tithes and Offerings in the offering plates at the rear of the sanctuary either before or after the service, or anytime in the offering box located in the narthex. Thank you!

Please read the announcements that are in this downloadable bulletin, as well as those we post on our Facebook site, our emails, and our phone calls, and then help spread the word to those who do not have access to any of those messages.

RECOGNITION OF THE ADVENT ARTISTS

**Evan Borger, Grant Borger, Owen Borger, Caroline Carll, Benjamin Good, Josie Good, Lily Meck, Abram Nagle, Elias Nagle, Hannah Nagle and Jeremiah Nagle**

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

*The congregation may stand.*

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung "Amen"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Our souls magnify the Lord.

**People: Our spirits rejoice in God our Savior.**

Pastor: The Mighty One has done great things for us. Holy is God's name.

**People: God's mercy is ever near, from generation to generation.**

Pastor: God's love fills us up, nourishing our hungry souls.

**People: God's grace has called us here, to worship the one to come. Amen.**

OPENING HYMN NO. 189....."Angels from the Realms of Glory"

*Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth;  
you who sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth:*

**Refrain:** *Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.*

*Shepherds, in the field abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night,  
God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light: [Refrain]*

*Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar;  
seek the great Desire of nations, ye have seen the natal star: [Refrain]*

*Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear,  
suddenly the Lord, descending, in his temple shall appear: [Refrain]*

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING.....Reader: Verna Ebling

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175.....“*We Light the Advent Candles*” (Verses 1 & 5 )

*We light the Advent candles against the winter night,  
to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light,  
to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light.*

*Four candles burning brightly announce that Christ has come,  
prepare, my heart, believe it, and give the Christ child room,  
prepare, my heart, believe it, and give the Christ child room.*

Advent Prayer

*The congregation may stand.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

**God of grace and God of glory, pour your power on your people. We long for the strength and the courage to glorify your name in all that we say and in all that we do. Open our eyes to the promise of your salvation, as you scatter the proud, pull down the powerful from their thrones, fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich away empty. Live in and through us this Christmas season, that we might be messengers of your grace and instruments of your peace. Amen.**

MOMENT OF PERSONAL CONFESSION

KYRIE

Pastor: Lord, have mercy upon us.

**People: Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Pastor: Christ, have mercy upon us.

**People: Christ, have mercy upon us.**

Pastor: Lord, have mercy upon us.

**People: Lord, have mercy upon us.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Pastor: Rejoice! God has looked with favor upon the powerless and the lowly.

**People: Christ has come to redeem us from our sin.**

Pastor: In the mercy of the triune God, we are forgiven. Amen!

THE GLORIA PATRI

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

*The congregation may be seated.*

**ENGAGING THE WORD**

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD.....Lector, Gavin Guers

Psalm: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 (Read Responsively)

Lector: I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

**People: I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.**

Lector: You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David:

**People: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"**

Lector: Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said: "I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.

**People: I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him;**

Lector: My hand shall always remain with him; my arm also shall strengthen him.

**People: The enemy shall not outwit him, the wicked shall not humble him.**

Lector: I will crush his foes before him and strike down those who hate him.

**People: My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him; and in my name his horn shall be exalted.**

Lector: I will set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers.

**People: He shall cry to me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation!'**

Epistle: Romans 16:25-27 (Page 990)

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38 (Page 887)

Lector: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE..... "Let Thy word abide in us, O Lord."

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM..... "Jesus, Messiah" by Dave Williamson

SERMON..... "Glorify God's Name"

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**  
*The congregation may remain seated.*

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 180..... "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting Light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above,  
while mortals sleep, the angels keep their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together proclaim the holy birth,  
and praises sing to God the King, and peace to all the earth.*

*How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.  
No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive him still the dear Christ enters in.*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide in us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

*The congregation may stand.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)..United Church of Christ Statement of Faith– adapted by Robert V. Moss

**We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother,  
and to whose deeds we testify: God calls the worlds into being,  
creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.**

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.  
 God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness  
 declared through prophets and apostles.  
 In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,  
 God has come to us and shared our common lot,  
 conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.  
 God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,  
 binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.  
 God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
 to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
 and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
 to join him in his passion and victory.  
 God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
 courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing,  
 and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.  
 Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen.

*The congregation may be seated.*

MEMORIAL GIFT DEDICATION

- Elwin Clauser
- Paul, Louise & Skip Clauser
- Mary Fertich
- Judy Fessler
- Sara Ella Krause
- Robert Kreager
- Elaine Moyer
- Clayton Peiffer
- Louise Peiffer
- Russel & Mae Peiffer
- Jack Rauenzahn
- Jean Schneck
- Jean Stank
- John Tassone
- Wayne Witmier
- Nancy Yob
- Annette Zemencik

PASTORAL PRAYER

Pastor: The Lord be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**  
 Pastor: Let us pray.

SILENT PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

PRAYER RESPONSE

*Hear our prayer, O Lord; Hear our prayer, O Lord; Hear our prayer, O Lord, And grant us Thy peace. Amen.*

CALL TO OFFERING

*The congregation may stand.*

OFFERING RESPONSE & DEDICATION.....DOXOLOGY

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below; Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

OFFERING PRAYER

GOING WITH THE WORD

COMMISSION

Pastor: Go forth, glorifying God with hearts full of joy.

**People: We will praise God with lips filled with laughter.**

Pastor: Bless the world with the mercy and grace you have received from God’s hand.

**People: We go in the fullness of God’s blessings.**

BENEDICTION

THE THREEFOLD AMEN.....Amen. Amen. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN NO. 191.....“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

*It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the earth to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heaven's all gracious King":  
the world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing.*

*Still through the cloven skies they come, with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed angels sing.*

*For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophets seen of old,  
when, with the ever-circling years, shall come the time foretold,  
when peace shall over all the earth its ancient splendors fling,  
and all the world give back the song which now the angels sing.*

SILENT MEDITATION

POSTLUDE

\* \* \* \* \*

*Portions of today’s worship resources were reproduced or adapted from the UCC’s Book of Worship,  
Worship Connection by Nancy C. Townley on MinistryMatters.com, and by B. J. Beu  
from the 2023 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.*

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-The altar flowers are in honor of a “Happy Birthday to Jesus” by Mr. and Mrs. Brian Clauser and family.

-The bulletins are in honor of Bill and Bonnie Reber’s Anniversary by Dylan, Kaitlyn, Jenna, and Kelly.

-The rose is in memory of Aaron Kreager by Amy Clauser and Amy Crouse.

-Offering on Sunday, December 17, 2023: \$2,790.00

-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2023: \$3,153.82

**-The December Communion Offering is designated to Samaritan’s Purse (to the Israeli Aid/Relief). The January Communion Offering is designated to Women in Crisis.**

**-The Christmas Fund special UCC offering will be collected TODAY** and goes towards providing financial assistance to retired ministers. Envelopes are available on the table next to the bulletin basket.

**-We will have two Christmas Eve candlelight worship services this evening** at 7:00pm and 11:00pm. Communion will be celebrated at both services. The 7:00pm service will have special music from the Minstrels, Sunday School children and the Senior Choir, and will be live streamed.

**-For anyone who ordered poinsettias: If possible, please do not take them following this morning's worship service**, but rather leave them here for the evening Christmas Eve candlelight services. They add beauty to the church sanctuary and we appreciate your consideration.

**-There will be a Board of Christian Education Meeting (SS) on Tuesday, January 2** at 7pm.

**-Help will be needed to remove and store away all the Christmas decorations on Sunday, January 7 following worship.** Please consider helping if you are able.

**-The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the second Tuesday of each month** from 10am-12noon in the conference room. The next meeting will be **January 9**. If you are interested in crocheting and/or knitting, we can hook you up! If you know of someone who could use a prayer shawl, please contact the church office.

**-The Council of Churches will host a Red Cross Blood Drive on Thursday, January 11** at Jerusalem Lutheran Church, Dock St., Schuylkill Haven. The donation time is 1-6:00pm. Please donate as the need is great!

**-The Installation of our new Consistory Members and Delegates will take place on Sunday, January 14** during the 10:30am Worship Service.

**-Fellowship Time (aka, coffee hour)-Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments** following our 10:30am worship service on **Sunday, January 14**. We will gather in the rear of the Sanctuary the Second Sunday of each month. Catch up with old friends, make new ones, and stay up to date on everything happening at St. Paul's. And best of all, it's free of charge!!

**-VBS Winter Wonderland:** All kids are welcome to join our extended Vacation Bible School and discover how God makes each of us unique...just like snowflakes! **We will meet at the church on Sunday, January 14, 2024** from 3:00-5:00pm. An RSVP to the church office or to Laura Carll at (484)269-4405 by January 1st is appreciated but not mandatory. Can't wait to see everyone there!

**-The Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry** is in great need and accepts all non-perishable food items/ paper products. Items can be dropped off at the church during the week or placed in the shopping cart at the back of the sanctuary. **NO OUTDATED FOOD PLEASE.** We will also be helping on **Monday, January 15** at 8:30am and Friday, **January 19** at 1pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

**-A Cabinet Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2024 following Worship.** It will be led by Mike Fessler to discuss direction for church activities in 2024. All leaders and any church member interested in providing suggestions and input on this topic are encouraged to attend. Your participation is appreciated.

**-Please have all information for the 2023 Annual Report to the church office by no later than Sunday, January 21, 2024.** The Annual Report will be available early in February prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 25, 2024. Please email your articles to the church office at [summerhillucc@gmail.com](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com), or put them in the secretary's mailbox. Please contact Kelly if you have questions.

**-Boy Scout Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, February 4, 2024.** Members of the Cub Scout Pack 651 and Boy Scout Troop 651 will participate in Worship at 10:30am.

**-“Souper” Bowl Sunday: On Sunday, February 11, 2024, we will join thousands of other churches and organizations tackle hunger by collecting canned food and/or cash donations.** All donations stay right in Schuylkill county to help our neighbors in need through the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry. Look for the specially marked donation boxes and donation pans when you come to church on “Souper Bowl Sunday”!

**-On February 11, 2024, we will honor couples celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries in 2024.** If you are married 50 years, or you know of a couple in the church who is, please contact Kelly at the church office.

**-The Bulletin and Altar Flower Sponsor List for 2024** is posted in the hallway next to the secretary’s office door. If you are already on the list, and would like to make any changes, please do at this time. There are openings for sponsorship throughout the year if you are interested. Please contact the church office if you have any questions about open dates, would like to make any changes, removals or additions. The sponsorship cost for fresh altar flowers is currently \$30, silk altar flowers are \$12 and bulletins \$10.

**-Your help is needed!! Now that we have settled into our new sound and video equipment, we are looking for some additional people to help run it on a Sunday morning!** Please let us know if you would be willing to help. We will then figure out a good mutual time to “train” those who are interested! Ideally, we will get a few people interested, and then sign up for Sundays either on a weekly or monthly basis, somewhat like the lectors.

**-When you or a loved one is sick or in the hospital for an extended stay, please notify the church office.** Please do not assume that the pastor will know you are there. We are served by many different area hospitals and do not know which one you may utilize. So please do not hesitate to let us know your condition so that Pastor Ken can provide you with spiritual care! You may call the church office at 570-754-7225 and leave a message 24/7 with your name, number, and what you are calling about. The staff will be notified remotely of your call and will get back to you as soon as possible. You can also email us at [summerhillucc@gmail.com](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com).

**-Our church services are livestreamed on Facebook!** We continue to reach many people who are unable to worship with us in person, giving them God’s message of hope and love. Call the church office if you or someone you know needs help getting online.

**-Prayer is Powerful!** Please continue to call the church office or email us your prayer concerns to be included on our prayer list. We believe in the power of prayer and want to pray for you. **We have a prayer concerns email group for anyone who would like to join.** Contact the church office and we will be happy to add you to the email distribution list. The Agape Committee continues to send cards to members on the prayer concerns list, so please continue sharing your concerns with us. Thank you!!

PRAYER CONCERNS: All those earnestly seeking God’s help in difficult times, Military personnel & National Leaders, *family and friends of Dean Sobar, family and friends of Carol Blankenhorn, Darlene Richard*, Curtis Bender, Mary Ann Shuliga, Dick Clauser, Anna Mae Minchoff, Cassie Wolfe, Harold Berkheiser, Marion Bartolet, Mabel Edwards

CANCER PATIENTS: Boone, Marie Bleu, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Glennis Eifert, Rebecca Henderson, Sherri Jo Jennar, Deb Kemmerling, Norma Koperna, Joan Krause, Carol Mallory, Carol Mengel, Tom Nagle, Judy Ohl, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson, Terri Willard

## **FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24**

### **Sunday, December 24 \*Christmas Eve**

7:00 & 11 PM -Candlelight Worship Services with the Sacrament of Holy Communion

### **Monday, December 25 \*Christmas Day \*Church offices closed**

### **Sunday, December 31 \*New Year’s Eve**

9:15 AM -Sunday School/ 10:30 AM -Worship

### **\*Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40