

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, January 28, 2024



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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am–2pm; Closed Friday
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Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Berger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer, from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar, **the UCC Justice and Witness Ministries.**

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.

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Fount of Life, Glorious One, your great works are full of honor and majesty:

People: The earth that we stand on, the trees that shade us, the birds that soar above us.

Pastor: Ever-Living God, Generous One, your goodness and faithfulness endure forever:

People: The wisdom we learn, the justice we long and work for, the hope you offer.

Pastor: Sheltering God, Healing One, you remember your covenant and its promises to us:

People: The grace and mercy you give, the healing you offer, the tenderness you show to us.

Pastor: The works of your hands are faithful and just. Your teachings are trustworthy and true.

People: Your praise endures forever! Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 667.....“God Has Spoken by the Prophets”

*God has spoken by the prophets, spoken the unchanging Word,
each from age to age proclaiming God, the one, the righteous Lord!
'Mid the world's despair and turmoil one firm anchor holding fast:
God eternal reigns forever, God the first and God the last.*

*God has spoken by Christ Jesus, Christ, the everlasting Son,
brightness of the Father's glory, with the Father ever one;
spoken by the Word incarnate, God of God, ere time was born;
Light of light, to earth descending, Christ, as God in human form.*

*God is speaking by the Spirit, speaking to our hearts again;
in the age-long Word declaring God's own message, now as then.
Through the rise and fall of nations one sure faith yet standing fast:
God abides, the Word unchanging, God the first and God the last.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Gracious God, when we speak of your great power, the power that abounds in creation all around us, we sometimes wonder if it is in our own lives. We hear that you are faithful, that you remember us and your promises, yet there are places in our lives that don't feel quite right. Forgive us when we often wonder what you have to do with our lives, and turn away from you. Help us trust your promised grace, for we long to touch your healing 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: Full of mercy and compassion, God knows us to the core of our being, and loves us through all of our days.

People: God offers redemption to people of every generation, making new life possible for everyone.

Pastor: Repent, believe in the gospel, and be healed! 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, Mike Rubinkam

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 (Page 168)

Psalm: Psalm 111 (Read responsively)

Lector: Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

People: Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

Lector: Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

People: He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the Lord is gracious and merciful.

Lector: He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

People: He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

Lector: The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

People: They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

Lector: He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

People: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Epistle: I Corinthians 8:1-13 (Page 996)

Gospel: Mark 1:21-28 (Page 867)

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.....“Be Thou My Vision” by Luke Woodard

SERMON.....“The Power of Authority”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 593.....“Lord, Speak to Me”

*Lord, speak to me, that I may speak in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek your wandering children, lost, alone.*

*O lead me, Lord, that I may lead the stumbling and the straying feet;
and feed me, Lord, that I may feed your hungry ones with manna sweet.*

*O teach me, Lord, that I may teach the precious things which you impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach the hidden depths of many a heart.*

*O fill me with your fullness, Lord, until my heart shall overflow
in kindling thought and glowing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.*

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.

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: What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

People: Everything! Jesus is the source of our life, our wisdom, our healing.

Pastor: God’s prophet, God’s Son, calls us to teach others of God’s power and might.

People: From this worshipping fellowship, we go into the community, seeking to tell others our stories.

Pastor: Go and share how God has transformed you. Invite others to become disciples.

People: We will invite others to share our journey, even if it scares us to death.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 638.....“Christ, the Healer, We Have Come”

*O Christ, the healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored when reached by love that never ends?*

*From every ailment flesh endures our bodies clamor to be freed;
yet in our hearts we would confess that wholeness is our deepest need.*

*In conflicts that destroy our health we recognize the world's disease;
our common life declares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?*

*Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your community may find
the wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach the whole of humankind.*

SILENT MEDITATION

POSTLUDE

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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, Worship Elements by Rebecca Gaudino from the 2024 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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-The altar flowers and bulletins are in loving memory of John Tassone and Ellen Harig by Mary Jane & Tom Toomey, and Lucille Faust and Family.

-Offering on Sunday, January 21, 2024: \$1,561.00
-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2024: \$3,243.09

-The January Communion Offering is designated to Women in Crisis. The February Communion Offering is designated to the Church World Service (CWS) Blanket Offering. The March Communion offering will support the Joe and Tamara Nagle Family (medical expenses).

-Gofundme to Help Mathias on His Spina Bifida Journey- Friends and family of Joe, Tamara, and baby Mathias- As a lot of you already know, Joe and Tamara recently received a serious diagnosis for their unborn baby. At a routine 20 week pregnancy ultrasound, their baby boy was diagnosed with Spina Bifida. Spina Bifida can come with a wide range of health issues and disabilities. Upon learning of the diagnosis, they were referred to CHOP and were candidates for fetal surgery, in hopes to stop further damage to Mathias' spine and brain. Tamara went through 3 long days of testing on both Mathias' and herself, and found she was eligible for this surgery. This surgery was Mathias' best chance at a normal life although is not without risks for mom and baby. If you would like to donate, you can visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-mathias-on-his-spina-bifida-journey> or you may also give to the March communion offering.

-Meals Needed: Tamara and Joe Nagle and their children along with Joe's mother, Lucinda have moved to the Philadelphia area Ronald McDonald House while they await the birth of Mathias. This will be over the course of a few months. Rae Ann Borger is organizing meals for Lucinda's husband, Tom and her mother, Marion. If you would be able to assist her with this effort, it would be greatly appreciated. Please speak to her or call 739-2311 for more information.

-Scout Sunday will be celebrated next Sunday, February 4. 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, 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, 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.

-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, February 11. 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!! Help is needed: If you would be interested in helping to assist in hosting a fellowship hour, please contact the church office or speak to Pastor Ken.

-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 be helping on **Monday, February 12** at 8:30am and **Friday, February 16** at 1pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

-The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. The next meeting will **Tuesday, February 13.** 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.

-There will be a Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting on Tuesday, February 13 at 7pm in room B1 (downstairs 2nd kitchen). Anyone interested in helping at VBS, which will be held June 17-21, is invited to attend. Please speak to Bill Reber for more information.

-A traditional Ash Wednesday Service will be held on Wednesday, February 14 at 7:00pm in person and live-streamed. The service will include the imposition of ashes and the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Wednesday evening Lenten services will begin **February 21** and continue through **March 20** at 7pm. Please join us as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

-Order forms are available for the Easter lilies. The **first deadline is Sunday, February 18** and the **final deadline is Sunday, March 3**. Each lily is \$7, and orders and money can be given to Ardith Moyer, Verna Ebling or the church office. No standing orders please!

-There will be a Consistory Meeting on Tuesday, February 20 at 7pm in the conference room.

-We will be collecting monetary donations on Sunday, February 25 to be used toward the Church World Service Blankets+ Program. Blanket offering envelopes will be available by the bulletin basket on the table in the narthex. Blankets+ is a special mission opportunity for all ages. Some 8,000 congregations and groups across the U.S. hold CWS Blankets+ events, providing funds to help people in need around the world, including the U.S.

-The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 25 following worship. In the event of worship cancellation, it will be held on **Sunday, March 3**. Annual reports will be available prior to the meeting.

-Anyone interested in learning more about our Sunday School program is welcome and invited to attend the Board of Christian Education Meeting on Tuesday, March 5 at 7pm. The meeting will take place downstairs in room B1 (2nd kitchen). Please speak to Laura Carll, any Sunday School teachers, Pastor Ken or the church office for you information.

-On Sunday, March 10, we will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. OGHS, the refugee, relief and development offering of the UCC, transforms lives through health, education, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries. Special envelopes will be placed on the bulletin table prior to that Sunday.

-In an effort to keep our records up to date, we are asking that if you have had a change to any of your information, would like to add a cell phone number or email address, or just want to be sure we have your most current info., please contact the church office.

-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.

-We are in need of altar prep volunteers. Everyone is welcome! It will be a rotation schedule on a weekly basis. You can sign up for one week or multiple weeks. Your assistance is needed to change the altar paraments, make sure altar flowers are changed and the oil candles are filled. “Training” will be provided! It’s a minimal commitment, but a great help in keeping our services running smoothly. If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please speak to Kelly Palerino.

-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.

-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!!

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

Sunday, January 28

Wednesday, January 31

5:30 PM -Confirmation Class

7:00 PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 4

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the Sacrament of Holy Communion and Scout Sunday

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

I Corinthians 8:1-13

Mark 1:21-28