

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, January 7, 2024

Owen Berger



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

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**The Baptism of Christ
The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

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, **all newly baptized Christians.**

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.

(Communion note: This morning, as some of us are gathered together here at church while many are gathering with us virtually from their homes, we all are invited to the same table. Those present this morning are invited to pick up a bag of individually prepared elements from the table in the narthex, as we will not be distributing the elements during the service. Those at home may gather bread and drink and partake as we do when we are gathered together.)

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung "Amen"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Christ's light is shining,

People: Calling us to respond with joy.

Pastor: Christ's light is shining,

People: Calling us to worship and praise. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 236....."As with Gladness"

*As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright,
so, most gracious Lord, may we evermore your splendor see.*

*As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
there to bend the knee before him whom heaven and earth adore,
so, may we with willing feet ever seek the mercy seat.*

*As they offered gifts most rare at that manger rude and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King.*

*Holy Jesus, every day keep us in the narrow way;
and when earthly things are past, bring our ransomed souls at last
where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

God, we are so tired. The holidays were a wonderful, busy time, as we celebrated the birth of Jesus. As we return to life without festive celebrations, we long to avoid feeling let down or discouraged. Teach us to listen for your gentle voice. Help us awaken to the quiet stirrings of new life in our hearts and in our communities. As your children, called into being by your word, remake and renew us, that we may follow you with joy. 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

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, Brook Koch-Guers

Old Testament: Genesis 1:1-5 (Page 1)

Psalms: Psalm 29 (Read Responsively)

Lector: Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

People: **Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; worship the LORD in holy splendor.**

Lector: The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over mighty waters.

People: **The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.**

Lector: The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

People: **He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.**

Lector: The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.

People: **The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness; the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

Lector: The voice of the LORD causes the oaks to whirl, and strips the forest bare; and in his temple all say, "Glory!"

People: **The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.**

Lector: May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!

Act of the Apostles: Acts 19:1-7 (Page 966)

Gospel Lesson: Mark 1:4-11 (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.....“Voice of the Almighty” by Jon Case

RESPONDING TO THE WORD
The congregation may remain seated.

HYMN NO. 241.....“When Jesus Came to Jordan”

*When Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized by John,
he did not come for pardon but as the sinless one.
He came to share repentance with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence with which good news begins.*

*He came to share temptation, our utmost woe and loss,
for us and our salvation to die upon the cross.
So when the dove descended on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended, the age of grace began.*

*Come, Holy Spirit, aid us to keep the vows we make;
this very day invade us, and ev'ry bondage break.
Come, give our lives direction, the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection that leads to Pentecost.*

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)The Apostles’ Creed

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. 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

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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation:

Pastor: Follow the star to the table of grace.

People: Here we find gifts beyond price.

Pastor: Follow the star to the table of blessing.

People: Here we find strength for the journey.

Pastor: Follow the star to the table of peace.

People: Here we find rest and refreshment.

Pastor: Follow the star to the table of Christ.

People: Here we find light and love.

The Great Thanksgiving:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Communion Prayer:

The Seraphic Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy glory, Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

The congregation may be seated.

The Communion Prayer (*cont.*):

Words of Institution:

Pastor: As Jesus faced condemnation and death, he gathered his friends for a meal.....And so, as we remember Jesus and his ministry of love and forgiveness, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Prayer of Consecration:

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.

Breaking of the Bread:

Lifting of the Cup:

Call to the Supper:

The Sharing of the Elements:

Blessing of the Children:

The congregation may stand.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (**Unison**):

O God, who in Jesus Christ called us out of darkness into marvelous light, enable us now strengthened by this meal to declare your wonderful deed. Thank you, O God, for your steadfast love and may we praise you now and forever with heart, mind, soul and strength. Amen.

GOING WITH THE WORD

COMMISSION

Pastor: Go forth to shine with the light of Christ's love.

People: We go forth to shine with the glory of Christ's grace.

Pastor: Go with God's love to serve creation with joy.

People: We go as God's beloved, building new communities of blessing for others.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 461....."Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,
that I may love whate'er you love, and do what you would do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,
until with you I will one will, to do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, so that your will is mine,
until this earthly part of me glows with your fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life of your eternity.*

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 Mary Petrina Boyd and the 2024 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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- The altar flowers are in memory of Mr. Paul Clauser Sr. by the family.

-The bulletins are in loving memory of Kenneth Kreager by Linda Clauser and Arlene Kreager.

-Offering on Sunday, December 31, 2023: \$2,334.00

-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2024: \$3,243.09

-The January Communion Offering is designated to Women in Crisis.

-Help will be needed to remove and store away all the Christmas decorations TODAY 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 **this Tuesday, 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 this 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 next 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 **next 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 next Sunday, January 14** from 3:00-5:00pm. An RSVP to the church office or to Laura Carll at (484)269-4405 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, or put them in the secretary's mailbox. Please contact Kelly if you have questions.

-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.

-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, *Jason Swick, Bev Kerschner, Rosanna Borgatta, Ron Mengel, Joe & Tamara Nagle and unborn son Matthias Joesph*, Darlene Richard, Curtis Bender, Mary Ann Shuliga, Dick Clauser, Anna Mae Minchoff, Cassie Wolfe, Harold Berkheiser, Marion Bartolet, Mabel Edwards

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FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 7

Sunday, January 7 *The Baptism of Christ

-Undecorate the church following worship

2:00 – 3:30 pm -Boy Scout meeting

4:00 – 7:00 PM -Cub Scout training and meetings

Monday, January 8

10:30 AM -Pastor Ken conducting Chapel Service at Luther Ridge

5:00 – 9:00 PM -Boy Scout training and meetings

Tuesday, January 9

10:00 AM -Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting

Wednesday, January 10

7:00 PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, January 14

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the Installation of Consistory and the Celebration of Baptismal Anniversaries

-Fellowship Time (aka coffee hour) following worship

3:00 – 5:00 PM -Youth VBS "Winter Wonderland"

5:30 PM -Cub Scout pack meeting

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

I Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

I Corinthians 6:12-20

John 1:43-51