

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, February 18, 2024



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

Website: www.summerhillucc.com

Livestream: www.facebook.com/summerhillucc

First Sunday in Lent

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger
Organist- Colin Andrew

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **St. John ELCA & UCC, Auburn** from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar.

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.

LENTEN CANDLES

Pastor: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

People: He was in the beginning with God.

Pastor: All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

People: And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

Pastor: He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

People: He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

[Extinguish one candle. Do not light it again until Easter]

Pastor: In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.

People: And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.”

(John 1:1-3, 14, 10-11 / Mark 1:9-11, NRSV)

HYMN OF REPENTANCE NO. 354.....“Just as I am” (Verse 1)

*Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Bring your lives, full of sorrow and joy.

People: Bring yourselves, full of hope and despair.

Pastor: Come in your brokenness, ready for fullness of life.

People: Stay in your weakness, ready to receive strength and the power of God.

Pastor: Come, let us worship our God who is with us today. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 252.....“Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days”

*Lord, who throughout these forty days for us did fast and pray,
teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.*

*As you with Satan did contend, and did the victory win,
O give us strength in you to fight, in you to conquer sin.*

*As you did hunger and did thirst, so teach us, gracious Lord,
to die to self, and so to live by your most holy Word.*

*And thro' these days of penitence, and thro' your Passiontide,
forevermore, in life and death, O Lord, with us abide.*

*Abide with us, that through this life of doubts and hope and pain,
an Easter of unending joy we may at last attain!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Merciful God, you know the worries and the doubts that fill our lives. You know how we turn from you in moments of weakness and despair when we should embrace you. Forgive us. Strengthen our faith and inspire our trust. Shower us with your mercy and grace, that we may embrace the fullness of life and love, through the power of your Holy Spirit and the mercy of Jesus, the Christ. 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: God is good.

People: *All the time.*

Pastor: And all the time,

People: *God is good.*

Pastor: Trust this truth and receive God's gifts of mercy, love, and forgiveness. 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, Trevor Smith

Old Testament: Genesis 9:8-17 (Page 7)

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10 **(Read responsively)**

Lector: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

People: *O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.*

Lector: Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

People: *Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.*

Lector: Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

People: Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.

Lector: Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

People: Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.

Lector: He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

People: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Epistle: I Peter 3:18-22 (Page 1060)

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15 (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.....“Lead and I Will Follow” by Tom Fettke

SERMON.....“Somethig Worth Holding Onto”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD
The congregation may remain seated.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 446.....“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

*O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.*

*O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day may brighter, fairer be.*

*O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain that morn shall tearless be.*

*O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.*

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison).....Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. 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: God continues to tear open the heavens of our world and our lives, calling out with a voice of love:
People: “You are my beloved children, whom I love deeply.”
Pastor: God continues to send us onto new paths and missions.
People: God changes our hearts and lives, and the Spirit pushes us in new directions.
Pastor: “Now is the time! Here comes God’s kingdom!”
People: We are Jesus people. We are kingdom people. Now is the time! Amen.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 254.....“Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley”

*Jesus walked this lonesome valley, he had to walk it by himself;
O, nobody else could walk it for him, he had to walk it by himself.*

*Jesus prayed for his disciples; he prayed alone for you and me.
O, nobody else could bear such sorrow; he prayed alone for you and me.*

*Jesus died on Calvary's mountain; he died alone for you and me.
O, nobody else could die for sinners; he had to die for you and me.*

*Jesus rose from death's dark prison; he lives again for you and me.
O, nobody else could bring us victory; he is alive to set us free.*

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, Worship Elements by Mary J. Scifres 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.

CCLI Copyright License Number 3253621 and CCLI Streaming License Number 20179084.

-The bulletins are in honor of Katie Fessler's birthday by mom, dad and Matt. (***Katie's birthday is this Thursday, February 22nd***)

-Offering on Sunday, February 11, 2024: \$2,263.00

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

-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).

-The 2023 End of Year statements are now available. Please see Kathy Kline or contact the church office.

-The Adult Sunday School Class started a Lenten study today based on the book "The Third Day" by Tom Berlin. We will explore the ways Christ's resurrection transformed the lives of the first apostles and how we too can experience that power today. It's not too late- All are welcome to join us in room B-1 at 9:15 AM each Sunday. Please speak to Pastor Ken to learn more.

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

-Our Wednesday evening Lenten services will take place this Wednesday, February 21 through March 20 at 7pm in the sanctuary. Please join us as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

-We will be collecting monetary donations next 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 next Sunday, February 25 following worship. In the event of worship cancellation, it will be held on **Sunday, March 3**. Printed copies of the annual report are available on the table in the hallway by the church administrator's office or by contacting the church office.

-Order forms are available for the Easter lilies. 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 fundraiser for the Cub Scout Pack 651 at the Friedensburg Country Restaurant on Tuesday, March 5. The Scouts will receive 20% of your total bill and the fundraiser will go through the day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. There are tickets on the table by the bulletin basket. You can also contact Lorna Palerino or the church office if you need a ticket.

-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.

- **A Blood Drive** hosted by the Sch. Haven Council of Churches will be held at Jerusalem Lutheran Church of Dock Street in Sch. Haven on **Thursday, March 7**. You can donate blood between 1-6pm. There is dire need for blood donations. Walk-ins are once again welcome. Please give!

-**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.

-**Join us for Fellowship Time (aka, coffee hour) on Sunday, March 10. Enjoy conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments, following our 10:30am worship service.** 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/ 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 **Monday, March 11** at 8:30am and **Friday, March 15** 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, March 12**. 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.

-**This year we are doing plastic egg donations for our annual Easter Egg hunt on Sunday, March 24** during the 9:15 Sunday School hour. They may be filled or not and you can place them in downstairs room B-1. **PLASTIC EGGS ONLY-** please no real eggs. **Plastic eggs will need to be here by March 17.** Thank you!! Please sign up with your name and how many dozen of eggs on the sheet by the bulletin basket.

-**Please note that the fresh altar flower sponsorship price will be going up in price from \$30 to \$35, effective April 1.** The silk flowers will still be \$12, and bulletin sponsorship will be \$10.

-**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, which can come with a wide range of health issues and disabilities. If you would like to donate, you can visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-matthias-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.

-**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!!

PRAYER CONCERNS: All those earnestly seeking God's help in difficult times, Military personnel & National Leaders, *family and friends of Judy Green, Guy Fessler*, Savannah Olsen, Diane Best, Brett Neifert Jr., Harold Berkheiser, Kenneth Smith, Ron Mengel, Joesph & Tamara Nagle and unborn son Mathias Joseph, Jason Swick, Shirley German, Guy Fessler, Dick Clauser, Cassie Wolfe, 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, Dr. Donald Moyer, Tom Nagle, Judy Ohl, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson, Terri Willard

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Sunday, February 18 *First Sunday in Lent *First Lily order deadline

2:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting and Pine Wood Derby

Monday, February 19 *Presidents' Day

Tuesday, February 20

7:00 PM -Consistory Meeting

Wednesday, February 21

7:00 PM -Lenten Worship Service

-Senior Choir Rehearsal following worship

Saturday, February 24

4:00-9:00 PM -Boy Scout Covered Dish Court of Honor

Sunday, February 25

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the CWS Blanket Offering

-Congregational Meeting following worship

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Psalms 22:23-31

Romans 4:13-25

Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9