

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, February 25, 2024



1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922

Pastor: Rev. Ken McDowell, cell phone: 610-207-4783

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am–2pm; Closed Friday

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Livestream: www.facebook.com/summerhillucc

**Second Sunday in Lent
CWS (Church World Service) Blanket Offering**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director & Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **Salem Hetzel’s, Pine Grove** 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: God created people to give him glory.

People: And he created a perfect place for them— a place that reflected his glory.

Pastor: He gave them everything they could need or want for happiness.

People: But they listened to God’s enemy.

Pastor: They didn’t really believe God’s gifts to them were enough for them.

People: So they turned their backs on God,

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

Pastor: and they lost their perfect place to live and their perfect friendship with God.

People: Now, they could see pain and futility and death in their future

HYMN OF REPENTANCE NO. 354.....“Just as I am” (Verse 2)

*Just as I am, and waiting not to rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, 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: In promise and covenant, God calls.

People: In hope and trust, we respond.

Pastor: In love and faithfulness, God saves.

People: In gratitude and joy, we come.

Pastor: Let us worship and praise God’s holy name. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 16.....“The God of Abraham Praise”

*The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above;
the ancient of eternal days, the God of love!
The Lord, the great I Am, by earth and heaven confessed,
we bow before your holy name, forever blest.*

*Your Spirit still flows free, high surging where it will;
in prophet's word you spoke of old and you speak still.
Established is your law, and changeless it shall stand,
deep writ upon the human heart, on sea or land.*

*You have eternal life implanted in the soul;
your love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.
We praise you, living God! We praise your holy name;
who was, and is, and is to be, fore'er the same!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Faithful One, we want to believe. Help our unbelief. We yearn to follow faithfully. Forgive our hesitant, stumbling steps. Hold us by the hand, guide us with your love, and cover us with your mercy and grace. Help us answer your call, trust your promises, and walk in your ways all the days of our lives. 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: Christ's righteousness has become our righteousness.

People: God's merciful love is enough to save us.

Pastor: All is forgiven.

People: All is restored.

Pastor: God's beloved are made righteous in Christ's grace. 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, Bonnie Reber

Old Testament: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16 (Page 12)

Psalm: Psalm 22:23-31 **(Read Responsively)**

Lector: You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

People: For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.

Lector: From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

People: The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever!

Lector: All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

People: For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

Lector: To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

People: Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,

Lector: And proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

Epistle: Romans 4:13-25 (Page 980)

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38 (Page 875)

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.....“I Am Not Ashamed” by Nan and Dennis Allen

SERMON.....“The Secret of Success”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 451.....“Be Still, My Soul”

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side! Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide-- in every change he faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

*Be still, my soul: your God will undertake to guide the future as he has the past;
your hope, your confidence let nothing shake-- all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: The waves and winds still know his voice who ruled them while he dwelt below.*

*Be still, my soul: The hour is hastening on when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone, sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past, all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

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: Though the former things are past and the future is unknown,
People: We go as God's beloved children.
Pastor: Go knowing that God's love and our place in God's realm is secure,
People: Both now and forevermore.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 351....."Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said"

*"Take up your cross," the Savior said, "if you would my disciple be;
deny yourself, the world forsake, and humbly follow after me."*

*Take up your cross, let not its weight fill your weak spirit with alarm;
his strength shall bear your spirit up, and nerve your heart, and brace your arm.*

*Take up your cross, heed not the shame, nor let your foolish pride rebel;
your Lord for you the cross endured, and fought the powers of death and hell.*

*Take up your cross, and follow Christ, nor think till death to lay it down;
for only they who bear the cross may hope to wear the glorious crown.*

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

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-The altar flowers are in honor of Robert and Violet Guers Birthdays by the Guers Family.

-The bulletins are in memory of granny and poppy, Uncle John, cousin Jamie and Aunt Sus from Dustin and Derek.

-Offering on Sunday, February 18, 2024: \$1,906.00

-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 available. Please see Kathy Kline or contact the church office.

-We will be collecting monetary donations TODAY to be used toward the Church World Service Blankets+ Program. Blanket offering envelopes are 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 TODAY following worship. Printed copies will be available at the meeting.

-The Adult Sunday School Class started a Lenten study 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.

-Our Wednesday evening Lenten services will take place this Wednesday, February 28 through March 20 at 7pm in the sanctuary. Please join us as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

-Order forms are available for the Easter lilies. The final deadline is next 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.

-**Your invited to the Everybody's Birthday Party on Friday, April 19 from 6-9pm.** It will be a pot-luck style, so you may bring a dinner choice and/or a dessert choice. Please sign your name and what you will be bringing on the sign-up sheet by the bulletin basket. We will have games & provide ice cream and drinks. We hope to see you there!!

-**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 Dr. Donald Moyer*, 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 25

Sunday, February 25

-Congregational Meeting following worship

1:00 PM -Boy Scout Meeting

Monday, February 26

6:00-9:00 PM -Boy Scout Meetings

Wednesday, February 28

5:30 PM -Confirmation Class

7:00 PM -Lenten Worship Service / Senior Choir Rehearsal following Worship

Sunday, March 3 *Final Lily Order Deadline

9:15 AM -Sunday School

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

5:30 PM -Cub Scout Den Meetings

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

I Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22