



St. Paul's Summer Hill UCC

April 2024 Newsletter



Pastor's Page

Pastor Ken Resurrection Greetings Summer Hill!

I read the following post by Rev. Michael Chua on his blog from April 19, 2014.

You probably do not recognize the name Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin nor should you. But many of you may have read or heard a version of this story in one of its incarnations. Nikolai Bukharin rose in the ranks of the Russian Communist Party and became one of the most powerful men as there was on earth. He personally took part in the Bolshevik Revolution 1917 that overthrew the Tsarist government which made him a legend of sorts. He was a prolific writer and apologist of communist propaganda, thus earning him the office of editor of the Soviet newspaper Pravda (which by the way means 'Truth' – that's irony!) and was a full member of the Politburo.

According to urban legend, the following story took place during a journey he took to Kiev in 1930 to address a huge assembly on the subject of atheism. Addressing the crowd, he aimed his heavy artillery at Christianity hurling insults, argument, and proof against it. An hour later he was finished. He looked out at what seemed to be the smoldering ashes of men's faith. "Are there any questions?" Bukharin demanded, thinking it to be merely rhetorical and not expecting any answer from the uneducated working-class peasants gathered there. Deafening silence filled the auditorium but then one man approached the platform and mounted the lectern standing near the communist leader. He surveyed the crowd first to the left then to the right. Finally he shouted the greeting that had been ingrained in the hearts and minds of Russian Christians for centuries: "CHRIST IS RISEN!" En masse the crowd arose as one man and the response came crashing like the sound of thunder: "HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

Back to me... When we watch the news and hear about all of the horrible things going on in the world today, it can make us feel like the end times are upon us, right now. And in some ways, they are. We are continuously moving towards and getting closer to the Kingdom of God which Christ ushered in during his earthly ministry. However, we just have no idea how long it will be until "Thy Kingdom Comes," completely.

But looking back on history can provide us with perspective, strength, and encouragement for the trials we are facing today. This story about a brave soul standing up in the face of evil and shouting the timeless truth that "Christ is Risen" along with the crowd's response, "He is Risen Indeed" gives me such great hope today. We can hardly imagine what life would have been like during and after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, especially for Christians. Very few of us have any idea of what it is like to really be persecuted for our faith, since we live in a nation that still values certain freedoms. However, it does feel like times are a changing.

What would you do, if you were faced with the type of religious oppression that was forcing you to denounce your faith in God? Would you hold your tongue in hopes of avoiding further attacks upon yourself and your family? Or would you be the brave soul who would boldly stand and proclaim the truth, that we worship the one true God, who sent his Son to die on a cross for the forgiveness of our sins? Would you stand, and shout, "CHRIST IS RISEN," knowing that you may face death, but assured of the promise of eternal life with Christ?

Each of us has a choice to make. Jesus said, "*For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.*" (Matt 16:25, NRSV) Will you stand up for Christ, who laid his life down for you?

Bold Proclamation Blessings,
Pastor Ken

Communion Offerings

The April Communion offering is designated to the Schuylkill Association Ministries.

The May Communion offering is designated to support Phoebe Ministries.

Fresh Altar Flower Price Change

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

Prayer Shawl Committee

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, April 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 or Nancy Dewald.

Fellowship Hour

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, April 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!! 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 and 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, April 15** at 8:30am and **Friday, April 19** at 1pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

The next Consistory Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 16** at 7:00pm.



You are 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 **by April 7**. We will have games & provide ice cream and drinks. We hope to see you there!!

Vacation Bible School Meeting

There will be a Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting on **Tuesday, April 23** at 7pm in Room B1. Speak to Bill Reber for more information.

Mark your calendar for VBS 2024.....**Monday, June 17-Friday, June 21**. More information and registration material will be included in the May newsletter. We invite all children ages 4 to 12 to join us for Scuba...Diving into friendship with God.

Motorcycle Ministry

Beginning in April, we will again designate the third Sunday of the month as "Bring your motorcycle to church" Sunday. Those dates are April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, August 18, and September 15. We will have a Blessing of the Bikes on our first ride in April. Spread the word, invite your friend, and join us for some fun and fellowship. If you would like to be notified of other rides throughout the summer, please notify the church office to have your name added to the "Biker" email list!

Help is Needed Mowing

It's soon mowing season! Volunteers are needed to mow the church lawn- a zero turn mower is provided. A signup sheet is on the table in the narthex. Please contact the church office for more information.



Baseball Outing

PLAY BALL! Spring is here and with it so comes America’s great past time of baseball. We have once again scheduled a group outing to see the Reading Fightin’ Phils on **Saturday, June 15th** against the Portland Sea Dogs. First pitch is at 6:45pm. Tickets are \$36.00 each and includes admission to the game, AYCE Buffet supper (starts at 5pm) and incredible fireworks to follow the game! A sign-up sheet is on table as you enter the sanctuary. Payment for tix can be given to Kelly in the church office or paid directly to Mike Fessler. There are 32 tickets reserved for us so tickets will be provided first come, first serve.

Red Geranium

Order forms will be coming soon for our annual red geranium sale, with flowers available following worship on Pentecost **Sunday, May 19.**

Mailing Addresses, Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

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.

AV System Volunteers

Now that we have settled into our new sound and video equipment, we are still 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.

Altar Prep Volunteers

We are still 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.



Your Consistory met on March 19, 2024 and discussed the following items:

Discussed the purpose of the 5th Sunday offerings and planned out the designations for the year

Discussed at length a proposal from the Scouts for a new award case. Consistory motioned to provide a place within the elevator hallway downstairs for a newer, bigger case to display awards and other accomplishments. The Scouts will also be given the Confirmation classroom as a central storage room for the Scout’s belongings.

Spring Cleanup was rescheduled due to inclement weather for a future weekend in April

April Communion offering will support the Schuylkill Association Ministries

May Communion offering will support Phoebe Ministries

The next Consistory Mtg. will be held on April 16, 2024.

Respectfully yours,
Trevor Smith, Secretary

“The cross is both the symbol of our salvation and the pattern of our lives.”

—Brennan Manning

Sunday School News

"I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the father except through me." -John 14:6

"Jesus is Risen, He is Risen Indeed!!" I hope everyone has a great Easter with their families. If you haven't signed up for the Everybody's Birthday Party, please do so by April 7th, 2024, so we have an accurate count.

Christian Education Secretary,
Amy Zimmerman

Important Dates:

April 19th, 2024- Everybody's Birthday Party

Thank You!!

-to the Guers family for sponsoring the shut-in mailing for April 2024

-to those members who contributed \$153.00 of Thrivent Choice® dollars

-Dear Pastor Ken,

On behalf of Phoebe Pastoral Care and the residents, I wish to express our gratitude to you for providing a very inspirational service on Sunday, March 17. We thank you!

Marilyn Kennedy

-Dear Members of St. Paul's Church,

Thank you for your support of the summer chaplaincy at Locust Lake State Park!!! Known for its popular camping area, Locust Lake State Park nestles on the side of Locust Mountain. The 52-acre Locust Lake is surrounded by beautiful forests. Hiking and fishing are popular activities in the 1,772-acre park. By your gifts, you became an enabler of transformation, renewal, and hope!

• our chaplain, Ellen O'Connell, was able to provide interdenominational worship services each Sunday morning at 9 AM from Memorial Day to Labor Day, with a total attendance of 187.

• our chaplain was able to make 279 visits to individual campsites, many that produced rewarding conversations.

• our chaplain helped people find God's peace to overcome the obstacles of stress and anxiety so prevalent in our world today.

• Ministry was provided to the campground staff, including the camp hosts and their families.

We, the members of the Locust Lake Committee, want to extend our sincere gratitude for St. Paul's Church's \$632.00 contribution to the Locust Lake Ministry in the past year.

Because so many people need hope today, your Locust Lake Committee has already begun to plan another vibrant summer season of worship and programs at Locust Lake for 2024. However, Chaplain Ellen cannot return, so we ask for your nominations for a chaplain. Learn more at <https://pachurches.org/ministries/campground-ministry/>. Send your suggestions to the Rev. Maureen Duffy-Guy at mduffygyuy@hotmail.com or cell (570) 952-5474. We look forward to hearing from you. Again – thank you very much!

Sincerely,

The Locust Lake Committee: Rev. Maureen Duffy-Guy, chair; Rev. Edward Gobrecht; Mr. Mitchell Raho; Rev. Karl Jones; and Rev. Kevin Duffy-Guy

-Dear friends of Saint Paul's,

On behalf of the staff and board of directors of Servants to All, we would like to thank you for your generous donation to help the homeless and those in need.

We never can thank you enough for your financial and prayerful support, and we could truly never do this work without you. You feed the poor. You clothe the naked. You house the homeless. Thank you!

Prayer, hard work, a vision and adequate funding have come together to bless and address the needs of Schuylkill County's most vulnerable and most desperate.

With sincerest gratitude,
Jeanette Triano Sinn,
Executive Director

Special Dates

- Administrative Professionals Day, April 24, 2024

Lectionary Readings:

Second Sunday of Easter, April 7

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

I John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

Third Sunday of Easter, April 14

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

I John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

Fourth Sunday of Easter, April 21

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

I John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

Fifth Sunday of Easter, April 28

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 22:25-31

I John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8

Sixth Sunday of Easter, May 9

Acts 10:44-48

Psalm 98

I John 5:1-6

John 15:9-17



Birthdays

- 1 - Karen Schultz
 - Diane Trout
- 2 - Mabel Edwards
- 4 - Taylor Kerstetter
 - Mitchell McBreen
- 5 - Tanya Elo
- 6 - Samantha Rodnick
- 7 - Laura Carl

- 10 - Bonnie Marshall
- 11 - Caroline Carl
- 12 - Helen Michelson
 - Becky Ulsh
 - Lynn Warke
- 13 - Nancy VanDeest
 - Guy Fessler
- 14 - Kelly Reber
 - Brantley Wolfe
- 15 - Mae Halabura
- 16 - Paul Shealer Sr.
 - Samuel Marra
- 18 - Jordyn Moyer
- 19 - Irene Knorr
 - Gaige Guers
 - Jackson Phillips
- 21 - Ellie Richards
 - Erin Richards
- 22 - Terry Blankenhorn
 - Mike Rubinkam
- 24 - Brian Strauser
- 25 - Lucinda Nagle
- 26 - Kathy Kline
 - Paul Moyer Sr.
- 27 - Jonathan Rodnick
- 28 - Donna Spotts
 - Crystal Lehr
- 29 - Julia Eckert



Wedding Anniversaries

- 3 - Tom and Terri Saunders
- 9 - David and Libby Zimmerman
- 21 - Richard and Debbie Clauser
- 22 - Daniel and Tanya Elo
- 23 - Kevin and Laureen Carpenter
- 25 - Craig and Victoria Borger
 - Rev. Ken and Ann McDowell

Baptismal Anniversaries

- Ella Sophia, daughter of Wade and Diona Sterner

Stewardship

Faithful Stewardship is about more than giving money. It is about returning just a small portion of what God has blessed us with so that the mission of Christ's Church can continue to spread the Good News of the Gospel and be the loving presence of God in this world. We do that in many different ways, such as providing opportunities for worship, mission work, Christian education, caring for those in need, supporting neighbors near and far through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), fellowship opportunities, and being a faithful example in our community.

All of these ministries take resources, and we often first think about financial ones. While those are certainly needed and we all should be contributing as we are able, our presence and Spiritual Gifts are just as important. Even if we had all the money we ever needed, without the participation of each of our members, we would not be able to minister to anyone. Without the Spiritual Gifts you have been given by God, we would not be able to accomplish the mission set before us. Without you, we are just an empty building. You are the church!

When each of us joined this community of faith called St. Paul's Summer Hill United Church of Christ, we took an oath. Each of us was asked this specific question about participation: "Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?" To which each of us replied: "I promise, with the help of God." That is an oath not to be taken lightly. We are all being pulled in many directions in our lives, and time is always at a premium, but there is no higher priority than giving back to God just a small portion of what God has blessed us with, which includes our time.

Please prayerfully consider if you have given of your time as God would have hoped you would, when you promised to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world. God is there to help us along the way, but we each need to do our part as well. We need your participation here at church. Please join us as we continue to be the shining light upon the hill, spreading the love of Christ to all.

Every Gift is Important! If even only half of our 152 Giving Units increased their weekly gift by \$10, St. Paul's would be able to meet our 2024 budget and continue all of our current ministries to spread the love of Christ!

If this number of Giving Units	Gave this much more each week.....					
	\$1	\$5	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$25
131	\$6,812	\$34,060	\$68,120	\$102,180	\$136,240	\$170,300
100	\$5,200	\$26,000	\$52,000	\$78,000	\$104,000	\$130,000
80	\$4,160	\$20,800	\$41,600	\$62,400	\$83,200	\$104,000
60	\$3,120	\$15,600	\$31,200	\$46,800	\$62,400	\$78,000
40	\$2,080	\$10,400	\$20,800	\$31,200	\$41,600	\$52,000
20	\$1,040	\$5,200	\$10,400	\$15,600	\$20,800	\$26,000
We could add this much to our yearly Giving!!						

Thankful Blessings,

The Members of St. Paul's Consistory

Bible Quiz

What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples — twice — when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. “Love one another as I have loved you.”
- B. “Peace be with you.”
- C. “The last shall be first and the first shall be last.”
- D. “I am risen!”

Answer: B (See John 20:19, 21.)

Christian Symbol



VICTOR'S CROSS

— Also called the conqueror's cross, the victor's cross is composed of the Greek cross,

recognized by its four equal

arms, adorned with Greek letters in each quadrant.

The top left letters stand for *Jesus* and the top right letters stand for *Christ* (the horizontal lines above them indicate that they are abbreviations). The four letters across the bottom spell the Greek word for *conqueror*.

The Joy of Jesus

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*

A Wakeup Call

God — let me be aware.

Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,
Just getting somehow safely through the days,
Not even groping for another hand,
Not even wondering why it all was planned,
Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,
Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,
Please, keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

God — let me be aware.

Stab my soul fiercely with others' pain,
Let me walk seeing horror and stain.
Let my hands, groping, find other hands.
Give me the heart that divines, understands.
Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.
Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.
Please — keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.

—Miriam Teichner

Mighty Metaphor Machine

While moving to a new parish, Rev. Watt A. Hardworker lost his metaphor machine. His friend, Rev. Hesa Goodpastor, wondered how Watt could preach without metaphors. Another pal, Rev. Bloomingwhere I.M. At, remarked, “There isn't enough skill in all of us clergy to preach week after week without some metaphors! The ‘Old, Old Story’ has been told so often that people tune it out without metaphors to help them hear it afresh.” He suggested organizing a metaphor collection to sustain Watt.

Hesa was open to the idea but worried that, with Easter approaching, Watt would be at a total loss. “What a catastrophe, especially starting out in a new church,” said Bloomingwhere. “How can the poor pastor possibly preach Easter without any metaphors?”

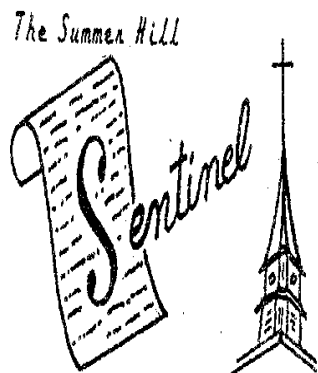
Hesa added, “No ‘butterflies emerging from the cocoon,’ no ‘awakening of daffodil bulbs after the long winter,’ no ‘flight of the Phoenix,’ no ‘resurrection as an image for a fresh start.’”

“He'll be left with nothing to say but that Jesus arose from the grave,” Bloom exclaimed. “Just imagine!”

—Stan Purdum

April 2024

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ
1235 Summer Hill Road
Auburn, PA 17922**



Church Phone: 570-754-7225
Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor: 610-207-4783
Office Hours: Tues.– Friday 9am - 2pm
Email: summerhillucc@gmail.com
Website: www.summerhillucc.com

Address Service Requested

Visit the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference –
www.psec.org
Visit the United Church of Christ – www.ucc.org

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Ken McDowell
Church Administrator & Cleaning: Kelly
Palerino
Music Director/ Pianist: Rae Ann Borger
Organists: Jacob Challenger/ Colin Andrew
(Supply)

Lay Leaders

Consistory President: Pam Clauser
Consistory Vice President: Jeff Palerino
Secretary: Trevor Smith
Assistant Secretary: Mike Fessler
Treasurer: Lori Moyer
Financial Secretary: Kathy Kline

Board of Christian Education:
Chairperson - Laura Carll
Vice-Chairperson - Vicky Borger
Secretary - Amy Zimmerman
Sunday Morning Coordinator: Trevor Smith
Assistant Sunday Coordinator: David Deibert
Stewardship/Mission: Lori Moyer, Tom
and Terri Saunders, Kathy Kline, Carol
Mengel and Trevor Smith
Budget Committee: Pam Clauser
Personnel Committee: Lori Moyer
Prayer Shawl Ministry Chair: Nancy Dewald

April 2024