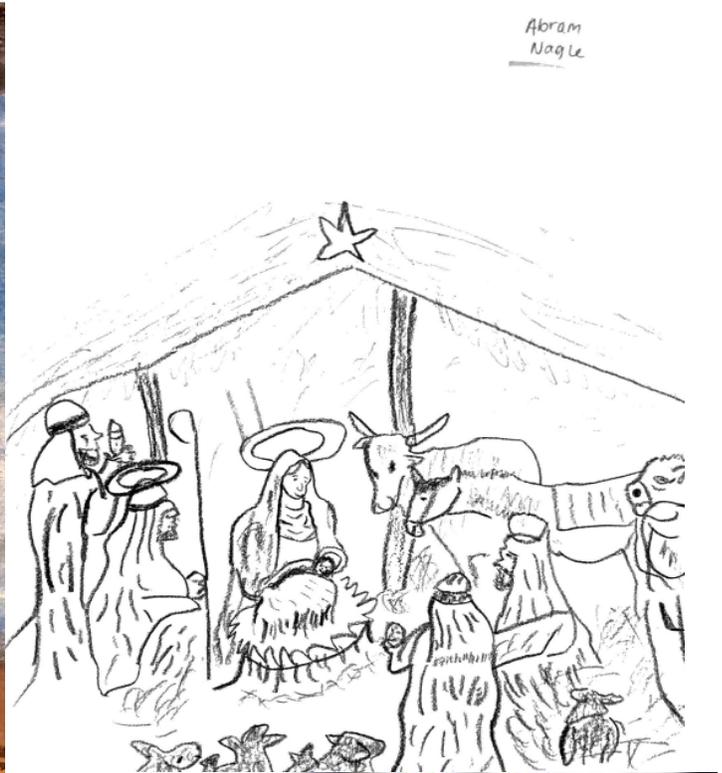
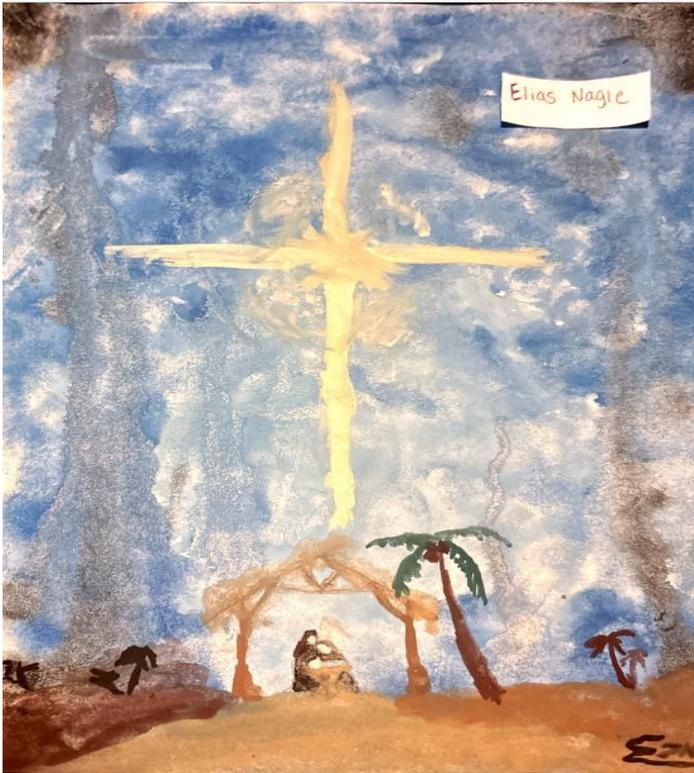


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, January 4, 2026



Jeremiah Nagle



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

Sunday, January 4, 2026

10:30am

**Second Sunday after Christmas/ Epiphany Sunday
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, **the Epiphany of Jesus Christ.**

Please read the announcements that are in this bulletin, the online bulletin, as well as what we post on Facebook, emails, and 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: In this holy season of Christmas, Christ comes to us again.

People: In this quiet after the harried days of December, God invites us to pause and reflect.

Pastor: Our journey has led us here, and the Spirit is with us now.

People: Let us bow down as sages of old, and worship Christ our King. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 218.....“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Light of the world, we yearn to walk in the light, but the shadows are all around and oh-so-familiar. Pull us from the darkness of fear of gloom—familiar places where we hide from you, from ourselves, and from others. Forgive us, and shine upon us with your grace, and pull us forward with your love. We yearn for the courage of sages of old who left hearth and home to draw closer to you. Give us the passion to stand up for justice, to share our gifts and talents generously, and to offer our love unconditionally, for we long to build your realm upon this earth. 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: Release the burdens of the past.

People: **We will relinquish control from that which is only in God’s hands.**

Pastor: Allow the peace of God to dwell in you, for you are forgiven. Accept this gift and relax in the warmth of God’s embrace. 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 Fessler

Old Testament: Isaiah 60:1-6 (Page 639)

Psalms Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 **(Read Responsively)**

Lector: Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king’s son.

People: May he judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice.

Lector: May the mountains yield prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness.

People: May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.

Lector: May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.

People: May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth.

Lector: In his days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

People: May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.

Lector: May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.

People: For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper.

Lector: He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy.

People: From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

Epistle: Ephesians 3:1-12 (Page 1018)

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12 (Page 835)

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.....“*We Three Kings*”

Words and Music by John Henry Hopkins Jr.; Additional Lyrics and Arrangement by Ed Kee

SERMON.....“*Sages of Old*”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD
The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 229.....“The First Noel”

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: Come to the table of grace.
People: All are welcome here.
Pastor: Come to the table of love.
People: This is the feast of God’s compassion for all.
Pastor: Come to the table of joy.
People: Christ invites us to celebrate his presence.
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:

Pastor: It is right and a joyous thing to lift our hearts and hands to you.....now as you reveal radiance to the world we join in singing of your glory...

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.

Words of Institution:

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: Arise, and go forth to shine for all the world to see.

People: We go to spread the good news of light and love, the hope of righteousness and peace.

Pastor: Follow the star that will guide you on your journey—this week, this year, and forevermore.

People: We go forth, as the magi of old, transformed by the presence of the child of light.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 236.....“As with Gladness”

SILENT MEDITATION

Acolytes take the Light out into the world.

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, and by Mary J. Scifres from the 2026 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. and Elaine Krause by the family.

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

-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2026: \$3,368.52

-The January Communion Offering is designated to the Schuylkill Hope Center for Victims of Domestic Violence (formerly Women in Crisis).

-Help will be needed to remove and store Christmas decorations TODAY following the worship service. We hope you can stay and help!

-For those volunteers taking food to the Pantry- Beginning January 1, 2026, the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry will be open to receive donations on the first three Mondays of each month (excluding holidays) from 8:30 to 10:30am. Please note this is slightly different from the past. Certainly, if there is a need to deliver at another time, arrangements can be made to deal with that by contacting Bill Reber at 570-621-8765. Thank you for your generous, continued support!

-There will be a Board of Christian Education Meeting this Tuesday, January 6, 2026 beginning at 7pm. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

-The Installation of Consistory Members and Delegates will take place next Sunday, January 11, 2026 during the 10:30am Worship Service.

-Fellowship Time: Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 10:30am worship service next Sunday, January 11, 2026. 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. We have been having a wonderful response to our monthly fellowship times! Donations of treats (cookies, brownies, cupcakes, muffins, etc.) are greatly appreciated.

-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. Please make sure the food items that you donate are not out of date. **We will be helping on Monday, January 12, 2026 beginning at 8:30am and on Friday, January 16, 2026 at 12pm.** Please speak to Verna Ebling, Bill Reber or the church office.

-The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. **The next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 13, 2026.** If you are interested in knitting and/or crocheting, we can hook you up! If you know of someone who could use a prayer shawl, please contact the church office or speak to Nancy Dewald.

-Please have all information for the 2025 Annual Report to the church office by no later than Sunday, January 18, 2026. The Annual Report will be available early in February prior to the Annual Congregational Meeting on

Sunday, February 22, 2026. Please email your articles to the church office at summerhillucc@gmail.com, or put them in the secretary's mailbox. Please contact Kelly at the church office if you have any questions.

-A Cabinet Meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, January 25, 2026. It will be led by Mike Fessler to discuss a focus and direction for church activities in 2026. All leaders and any church member interested in providing suggestions and input on this topic are encouraged to attend.

-We are looking for youth to serve as acolytes on Sunday mornings during the worship services. If your child is interested in helping and would like to learn more, please speak to Laura Carll, Pastor Ken or the church office. Training will be provided.

-The Bulletin and Altar Flower Sponsor List for 2026 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 so 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, or would like to make any changes, removals or additions. The sponsorship cost for fresh altar flowers is currently \$35, silk altar flowers are \$12 and bulletins \$10.

-Shut-In Mailing Sponsorship 2026: We are very thankful to everyone who faithfully sponsors the shut-in mailings each month. The cost is \$20, which enables us to continue to send bulletins to our shut-in members each month. If you would like to select a month for sponsorship, please sign the paper by the secretary's office door or call the church to have your name added. When paying, please note that it's for the shut-in mailing, along with the month you selected.

-We are still in need of altar prep volunteers. Everyone is welcome! It can 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 to anyone interested! 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.

-Following many natural disasters, **Clean-Up Buckets** provide those affected with the essentials to begin getting their lives back in order. The Schuylkill Association, working with the UCC Disaster Ministries, helps provide these kits through Church World Services anywhere they are needed, to include right here in Schuylkill County. Our Association currently has over sixty empty five gallon buckets that need to be filled. **If you would like to help in this ministry by coordinating the filling of some of the buckets or can donate materials or money to buy the required materials, please contact the church office.** Learn more at <https://cwskits.org/>.

-In an effort to keep our records up to date, please contact the church office if you have had a change to any of your information, to include phone or cell phone numbers, email or home addresses, or any family updates.

-When you or a loved one is sick or in the hospital for an extended stay, do not assume that the pastor will know you are there. Please call or email the church office so that Pastor Ken can provide you with spiritual care!

-Prayer is Powerful! Please call or email the church office with your prayer concerns. We believe in the power of prayer and want to pray for you. **We have a prayer concerns email group AND also a prayer phone call chain for anyone interested.** Please contact the church office if you would like to be added to these lists.

PRAYER CONCERNS: All those earnestly seeking God's help in difficult times, Military personnel & National leaders, *family and friends of Stephen Hood, the friends and family of Linda Bell, the family and friends of Raymond Moyer, Keith McKeivitt, Diona Sterner, Akbarov family, Shirley Williamson, Lynn Moyer, Jeffrey Paumen, Amy Koons, John Borchick, Carley McGovern, Mary Bartolet, Lester Knapp, Cathy Krause, Pat Guers, Don Rubinkam, Mathias Nagle, Aiden Rodreguez*

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FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026

Sunday, January 4, 2026

-Undecorate the church following worship

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

Tuesday, January 6, 2026 -Epiphany

7:00 PM -Board of Christian Education Meeting (conference room)/
Private Meeting (Room B1)

Wednesday, January 7, 2026

7:00 PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, January 11, 2026

9:15 AM -Sunday School

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

-Fellowship time following worship

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17