

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Sunday, February 22, 2026**



FIRST SUNDAY  
*in*  
LENT

**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](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.summerhillucc.com](http://www.summerhillucc.com)

**Livestream:** [www.facebook.com/summerhillucc](http://www.facebook.com/summerhillucc)

1782  
Sunday, February 22, 2026

244 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

2026  
10:30am

First Sunday in Lent  
CWS Blanket Offering

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer, from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar, **the Wider Church Ministries.**

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.

LENTEN CANDLES

Focus: The Shadow of Temptation: The rejection of God’s will for the sake of power.

Scripture: “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” (Matthew 4:1)

Pastor: At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was led into the wilderness. The world offered him power, bread, and glory if only He would turn away from the Father.

**People: We confess that we often choose our own comfort over the calling of God.**

Pastor: As we extinguish this first light, we remember how the shadows of temptation sought to shroud the Light of the World.

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

RESPONSIVE HYMN 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: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice.

**People: Steadfast love surrounds those who trust the Lord.**

Pastor: When we confess our transgressions, Christ’s grace and forgiveness encompass us.

**People: Steadfast love surrounds those who trust the Lord.**

Pastor: Open yourselves to the teachings and wisdom of the Spirit.

**People: Steadfast love surrounds those who trust the Lord. Amen.**

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

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

**Holy God, just as Jesus faced temptations in the wilderness, we too struggle with desires for power, glory, or riches. Forgive us, and teach us to turn from these temptations and to turn toward the power of scripture and prayer. Center us in our faith. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 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: Many are the torments of the wicked;

**People: But steadfast love surrounds those who trust the Lord.**

Pastor: Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, shout for joy, for we are forgiven. 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, Nancy Dewald

Old Testament: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 (Page 2)

Psalm: Psalm 32 (Read responsively)

Lector: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

**People: Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

Lector: While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

**People: For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

Lector: Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

**People: Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.**

Lector: You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

**People: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**

Lector: Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

**People: Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.**

Lector: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Epistle: Romans 5:12-19 (Page 980)

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11 (Page 837)

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.....“By One Man” -Written by Bill Cantos and Arranged by Lura Foster

SERMON.....“It’s Inevitable, Or Is It?”

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

*The congregation may remain seated.*

*Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.*

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 254.....“Jesus Walked This Lonesome Valley”

*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: Go with joy.

**People: Our transgressions are forgiven.**

Pastor: Go with hope.

**People: Our sin is covered.**

Pastor: Go with love.

**People: Our hearts are uplifted by the tender mercies of our God.**

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 748.....“Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing”

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 Karen Clark Ristine from the 2025 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 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 15, 2025: \$3,487.00

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

**-The February Communion Offering is designated to the CWS (Church World Service) Blanket offering. The March Communion Offering is designated to the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry.**

**-Please stay for our Annual Congregational Meeting TODAY following worship.**

**-TODAY is the deadline to sign-up for the Reading Phillies game on Saturday, July 18, 2026** against the Altoona Curve (Pirates). First pitch is at 6:45pm. Picnic table seats will be in the '67 Club along the 3rd base side ground level. There will be an AYCE Buffet for 2.5 hours starting a half an hour prior to game time (BBQ Ribs & Chicken, BBQ sandwiches, Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Cheeseburgers, Vegetable lasagna, Mac & Cheese, Baked Beans, Pasta and Potato Salad, Tossed Salad, Fruit, Cookies and Pepsi Products). There will be a "Mega Blast" Fireworks show immediately following the conclusion of the game. Tickets are \$43.00 per ticket. Children 4 years old and under are free of charge. Please make checks out to St. Paul's UCC or provide cash and give to Kelly Palerino. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin table. Think Spring! Hope to see you there!

**-Prayer Concern Privacy:** As Christians, we fervently believe in the power of prayer — that’s why we include prayer concerns in the weekly bulletin and lift folks up in prayer during worship! That said, the Consistory respectfully asks that before you add somebody to the prayer list or bring up their name during worship, please obtain that person’s permission. We take medical privacy very seriously and make every effort to respect the wishes of individuals who do not want to be named publicly in a bulletin or live-streamed worship service. Thank you for your cooperation!

**-Our Easter flower sale has begun. This year we are once again offering a variety of beautiful Easter flowers.** (Prices: Easter Lily- \$15.50; Tulip- \$12.05; Daffodil- \$12.50) Order forms are available on the bulletin table. Orders and money may be given to Lori Moyer, Ardith Moyer or dropped/ mailed to the church office. Money is due at the time you place your order. **The final deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 15.**

**-We are still looking for kids who want to showcase their musical talents during Lent.** Any kids who wish to perform can speak to Laura Carll.

**-Join us this Wednesday, February 25 for our evening Lenten service which will be held at 7pm. Services will continue each week through March 25.** The services will be based on Adam Hamilton’s Book, “Why Did Jesus Have to Die? The Meaning of the Crucifixion.” Pastor Ken will also be leading lessons from the book each Sunday during Lent, at 9:15am in the downstairs Generations Adult Class in room B1. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please speak to Pastor Ken if you have any questions.

**-A Cabinet Meeting will be held following worship next Sunday, March 1.** 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.

-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 3** at 7pm. Please speak to Laura Carll, any Sunday School teachers, Pastor Ken or the church office for more information.

**-All kids are invited to join our Youth Group Escape Room on Saturday, March 7th** from 4-7pm here at St. Paul’s UCC. Solve puzzles as you race through the rooms to see who can finish first! Pizza will be provided. **An RSVP is appreciated by Sunday, March 1st** but is not required. We can't wait to see everyone here!

**-Fellowship Time:** Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 10:30am worship service on **Sunday, March 8.** 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 Prayer Shawl Ministry** meets the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. **The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 10.** 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 Nancy Dewald.

-Mark your calendars! The annual **Everybody’s Birthday Party** will be held on **Friday, March 13** beginning at 6:00pm. It will be potluck style, and Sunday School will provide a cake to celebrate.

**-On Sunday, March 15, 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 on the bulletin table prior to that Sunday.

**-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.

-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, including 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 of Grayson Weiser, family and friends of Wayne Bartolet, family and friends of Sallie Krause,* Cathy Krause, John Borchick, Peggy Kooser, Ronnie Mengel, Dave Heim, Shirley Williamson

CANCER PATIENTS: Al Basci, Joe Branca, Bill Dobrolsky, Deb Dimitri, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Glennis Eifert, Meg Goodwin, Laura Haupt Grapsy, Rebecca Henderson, Lisa Hoynoski, Sherri Jo Jennar, Deb Kemmerling, Clara Kramer, Joan Krause, Lori Krug, Mary Ann Maccoron, Carol Mallory, Nicole McFarland-Bish, Tara Moss, Judy Ohl, Dana Osborne, Nick Reading, Pat Reading, John Redman, Amy Reed, Noah Richardson, Jen Semenco, Jim Thompson

## **FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22**

**Sunday, February 22 -First Sunday in Lent -Deadline to sign-up for the Baseball outing**

-CWS Blanket Offering

-Annual Congregational Meeting following worship

**Monday, February 23**

6:00 – 9:00 PM -Boy Scout Meetings

**Wednesday, February 18**

7:00 PM -Wednesday Lenten Worship Service

-Senior Choir Rehearsal following worship

**Sunday, March 1**

9:15 AM -Sunday School

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

-Cabinet Meeting following worship

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

**\*Lectionary Readings for next week:**

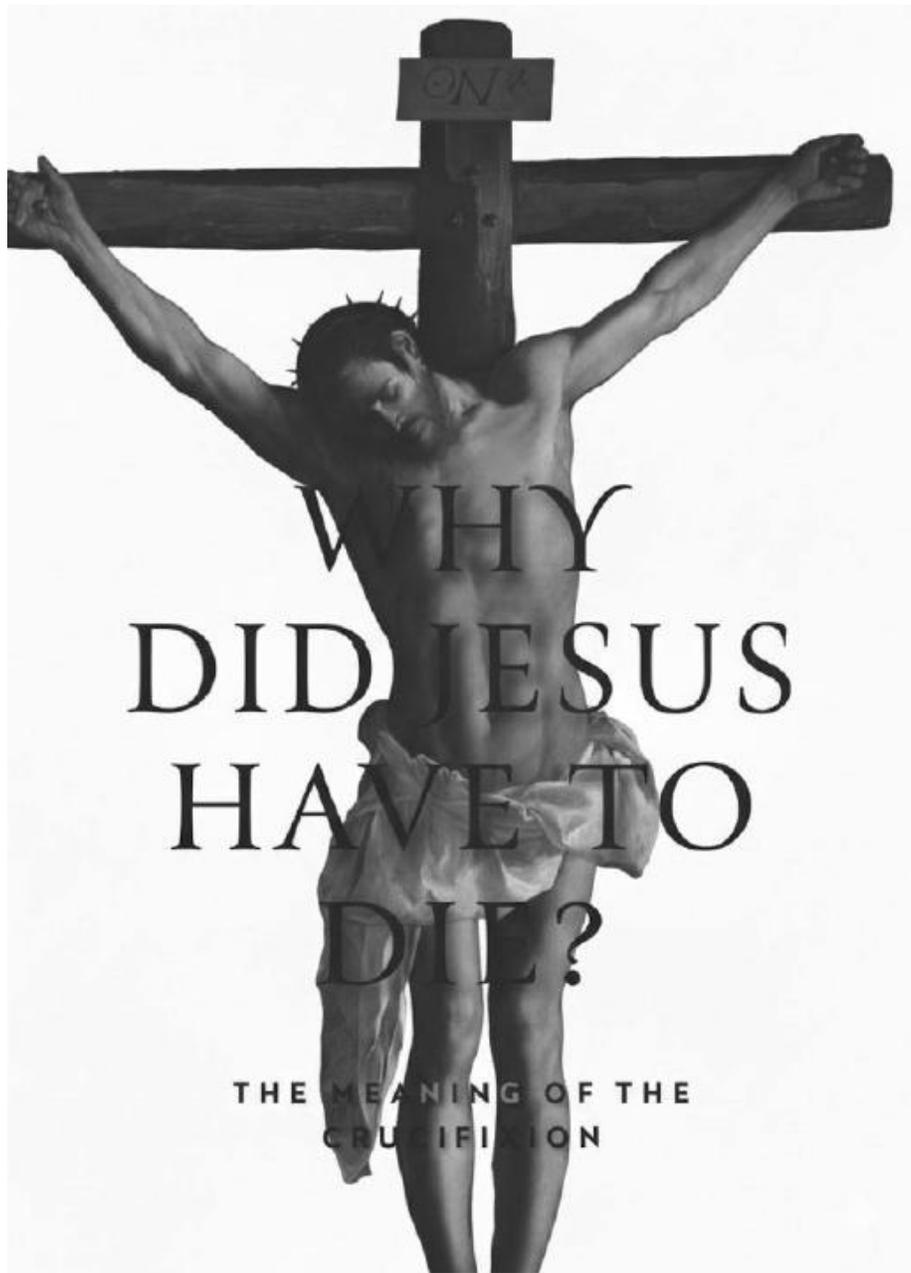
Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9

# PLEASE JOIN US!



## **St. Paul's UCC Wednesday Lenten Worship Services**

**February 25 through March 25 – each week at 7pm**

The services, led by Pastor Ken, will be based on Adam Hamilton's Book, "Why Did Jesus Have to Die? The Meaning of the Crucifixion."

Pastor Ken will also be leading lessons from the book each Sunday during Lent at 9:15am in the downstairs Generations Adult Class in room B1.

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.