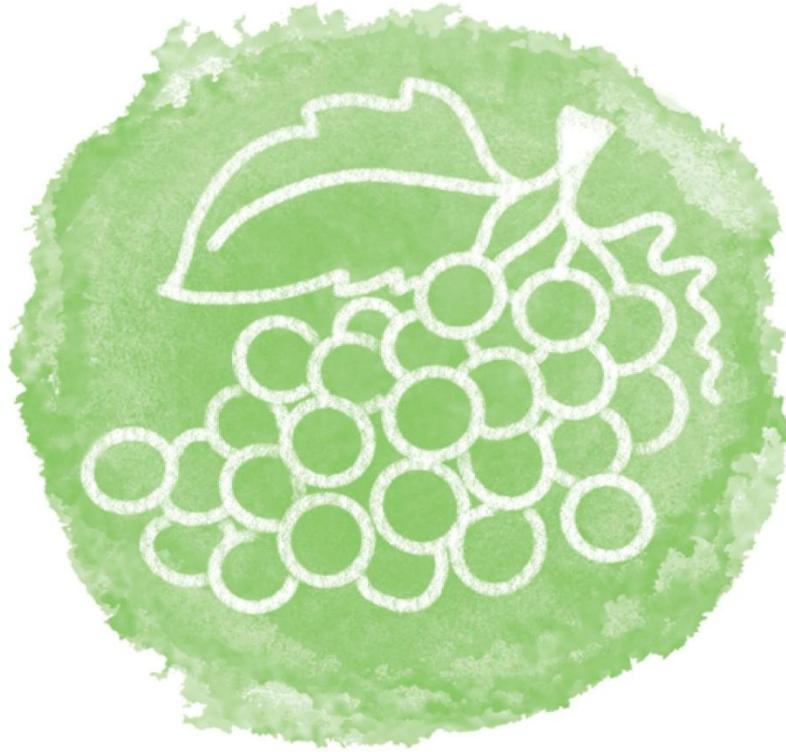


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, March 22, 2026



FIFTH 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

Website: www.summerhillucc.com

Livestream: www.facebook.com/summerhillucc

Fifth Sunday in Lent

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 One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.**

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 Judgment: The world’s condemnation of the only Innocent One.

Scripture: “Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said, ‘Let him be crucified!’” (Matthew 27:22)

Pastor: "Crucify Him!" cried the crowd. The world chose a murderer over the Savior, preferring the darkness they knew to the Light they could not control.

People: We confess that we are often quick to judge others while ignoring the wood in our own eyes.

Pastor: As we extinguish this fifth light, we witness the world’s attempt to judge the One who comes to save.

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

RESPONSIVE HYMN NO. 354.....“Just As I Am” (verse 5)

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe, 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: Everything seems dead.

People: There is no life anywhere.

Pastor: Our hopes have perished.

People: We see no future.

Pastor: Send the power of your spirit upon us.

People: Breathe new life into us.

Pastor: We wait for your transforming love.

People: We hope. We wait. We trust. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 118.....“Lord of the Dance”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

We cry to you, O God. It is so easy to be overwhelmed with all that is going on. It is so hard to see any hope. Everywhere we look, we see struggles and loss. We feel we have failed. Forgive us. But where we see death, you breathe new life. Where we see failure, your forgiving love changes everything. You

alone, O God, have the power to bring forth new life, new hope, and new beginnings. Be with us as we wait for you. Teach us to place our trust in your faithful love. 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: Jesus promises, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever trusts in me will live."

People: Let us trust the promise of new life.

Pastor: God promises forgiveness. So we wait in hope, placing our trust in God's word. 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

SPECIAL MUSIC.....Soloist- Lily Meck

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD.....Lector, Brook Koch-Guers

Old Testament: Ezekiel 37:1-14 (Page 747)

Gospel: John 11:1-45 (Page 934)

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 the Resurrection" - Libby Zimmerman, Soloist
Words and Music by Pete Carlson and John Lemonis; Arranged by Kyle Hill"

SERMON....."Hope Springs Eternal"

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 461....."Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

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: Where there seems to be no life, God breathes new life.
People: Where there is no hope, God comes with new possibilities.
Pastor: Go forth into the world, knowing that God is at work in every place.
People: We feel the breath of God blowing peace and new life into our lives.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 255.....“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

SILENT MEDITATION

Acolytes take the Light out into the world.

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 Boyd from the 2026 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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-The altar flowers are in loving memory of Skip Clauser by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Clauser and family.

-The bulletins are in loving memory of Skip Clauser by Dick, Linda, Christopher and Amy Clauser.

-Offering on Sunday, March 15, 2025: \$3,313.25

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

-The March Communion Offering is designated to the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry.

-You can still give to the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. Envelopes are in the basket on the bulletin table.

-Today is the deadline to sign up for the Maundy Thursday Worship Service Seder Meal on April 2 at 6:00 pm. Although we will try to make room at the table for anyone who shows up, we ask that you please sign up to help us plan this special service. This special service is a modified version of the Jewish Passover Seder Meal, recalling the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples before his betrayal, arrest, trial, and ultimately his crucifixion.

-Join us this Wednesday, March 25 for our last evening Lenten service beginning at 7pm.

-Prior to Saturday, March 28: Please remove any winter arrangements from the cemetery that you would like to keep. Thank you.

-There will be an egg hunt hosted by the Sunday School next Sunday, March 29. Children should arrive at 9:15am for a short lesson with their Sunday School class. All classes will participate in the egg hunt together following their lesson. There will be goody bags after the egg hunt, so please make sure you get one from Amy Zimmerman.

-We will collect the 5th Sunday offering next Sunday, March 29 which is designated to the Pastor’s Emergency Relief Fund. Special envelopes are in the basket on the bulletin table.

-All are welcome to an Egg Hunt at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church on Sunday, March 29 beginning at 2pm.

-A Good Friday Tenebrae Service will be held on April 3 at 7:00pm.

-Easter Sunday, April 5: We will rejoice and celebrate Christ's resurrection beginning with our **Sunrise Service** at 6:30am on Easter morning. An **Easter Breakfast** will be held in the fellowship hall at approximately 7:15am followed immediately by a worship service with Holy Communion around the breakfast table (8:15am). Sunday School will be held at 9:15am, followed by the **10:30am Easter Worship Service** with Holy Communion. Please sign up for the Easter breakfast to help in planning.

-Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 10:30am worship service on Sunday, April 12. 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. **We will be helping on Monday, April 13 beginning at 8:30am and Friday, April 17 beginning 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, April 14.** 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.

-There will be a Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting on Tuesday, April 14 at 7:00pm in downstairs room B1. Anyone interested in helping at VBS, which will be held June 22-26 is invited to attend. Please speak to Bill Reber for more information.

-St Paul's UCC will once again have a YARD SALE on Saturday, May 2 from 8am to 1pm. There will be indoor and outdoor spaces available for members of the church and their friends. Spaces will cost \$10 and can be paid to Trevor Smith or the church office. In addition, we will also be having a small concession stand and bake sale. **We are kindly asking for donations of food items and baked goods, as well as volunteers to help in the kitchen.** Sign-up sheets are located in the narthex for vendors as well as food donations/volunteers. Flyers will be available for advertisement. **The deadline to sign up will be Sunday, April 26th.**

-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!

-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, *Cassie Wolfe, Amber Chick, Mike Fessler, family and friends of Felicia Moyer*, Keith McKevitt, Nancy VanDeest, Ernest Towne, Cathy Krause, John Borchick, Ronnie Mengel, Dave Heim, Shirley Williamson

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

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, MARCH 22

Sunday, March 22 -Deadline for Seder Meal

-Deadline for plastic egg donations

Monday, March 23

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Sub Sale Pick-up

6:00 – 9:00 PM -Boy Scout Meetings

Wednesday, March 25

7:00 PM -Wednesday Lenten Worship Service

-Senior Choir Rehearsal following worship

Sunday, March 29 -Palm/Passion Sunday

9:15 AM -Sunday School/ Easter Egg Hunt

10:30 AM -Worship with the Blessing of the Palms and Recognition of the 50th Anniversary of the Confirmation Class of 1976

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Liturgy of the Palms Readings:

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

Liturgy of the Passion Readings:

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54