

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, July 26, 2026



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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**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
Outdoor Worship**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **St. Peter's (Orwin)** from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar.

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.

***For safety, the congregation may remain seated throughout the entire service,
but feel free to stand at any time in response to the urging of the Holy Spirit.***

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung "Amen"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Give thanks to God, for God is good.

People: God's goodness and mercy are sure.

Pastor: Sing to the Spirit, for the Spirit is here.

People: The Spirit knows the ache for connection deep within us.

Pastor: Praise Christ Jesus, who loves us

People: with a love that is boundless and true.

Pastor: Give thanks to God, and sing God's praise,

People: as we worship together this day. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 35....."Morning Has Broken"

*Morning has broken like the first morning, blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning! Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!*

*Sweet the rain's new fall, sunlit from heaven, like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden, sprung in completeness where his feet pass.*

*Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning, God's recreation of the new day!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

God of mystery and majesty, we want to understand your ways, but we seldom can. Help us accept the unfathomable truth of your love. Help us embrace the mystery of your wisdom. Grant us patience when your promises seem delayed, and grant us perseverance when we are tempted to turn away in despair. Most of all, reveal your love to us, that we may truly trust this truth—that nothing can separate us from your love, your mercy, and your grace. In hope and faith, we pray. 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

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.

ENGAGING THE WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD.....Lector, Joe Branca

Old Testament: Genesis 29:15-28 (Page 24)

Psalm: Psalm 105:1-11, 45b (Read responsively)

Lector: O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples.

People: Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

Lector: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

People: Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.

Lector: Remember the wonderful works he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,

People: O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

Lector: He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

People: He is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,

Lector: The covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac,

People: Which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant,

Lector: Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance."

People: Praise the Lord!

Epistle: Romans 8:26-39 (Page 983)

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 (Page 847)

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE..... "Let Thy word abide in us, O Lord."

SERMON..... "What is Heaven Like?"

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 549..... "I Love Your Kingdom, Lord"

*1 I love your kingdom, Lord, the house of your abode,
the Church our blest Redeemer saved with his own precious blood.*

*2 I love your church, O God-- her walls before you stand,
dear as the apple of your eye, and graven on your hand.*

*3 For her my tears shall fall, for her my prayers ascend,
to her my cares and toils be given till toils and cares shall end.*

*4 Beyond my highest joy I prize her heavenly ways,
her sweet communion, solemn vows, her hymns of love and praise.*

*5 Sure as your truth shall last, to Zion shall be given
the brightest glories earth can yield, and brighter bliss of heaven.*

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.

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

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: Beloved ones, go now to love.

People: We will grow God's realm.

Pastor: Beloved of God, go to proclaim Christ's grace.

People: We will be vessels of mercy and live in the Spirit.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 348....."Softly and Tenderly"

*1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
see, on the portals he's waiting and watching,
watching for you and for me.*

Refrain: *Come home, come home, ye who are weary, come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling, calling, O sinner, come home!*

*2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading,
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies,
mercies for you and for me? [Refrain]*

*3 O for the wonderful love he has promised,
promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon,
pardon for you and for me. [Refrain]*

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

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-Offering on Sunday, July 19, 2026: \$2,988.00

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

-The July Communion Offering is designated to the One Rock One Community Gospel event. The August Communion Offering is designated to the Alzheimer's Association.

-Fellowship Hour: Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 9:30am worship service on **Sunday, August 9**. We will gather in the rear of the sanctuary. Catch up with old friends, make new ones, and stay up to date on everything happening at St. Paul's. Donations of treats (cookies, brownies, cupcakes, muffins, etc.) are greatly appreciated.

-The third Sunday of the month is "Bring your motorcycle to church" Sunday. A group ride will follow the service. The upcoming dates are **August 16 and September 20**. Spread the word, invite your friends, 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 be added to the "Biker" email list!

-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, August 17** beginning at 8:30am and **Friday, August 21** beginning at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling, Bill Reber or the church office.

-The Consistory will meet on Tuesday, August 18 at 7:00pm in the conference room.

-Our last outdoor worship service for the summer will be held on **Sunday, August 23** beginning at 9:30am. Grab your lawn chair or favorite blanket and join us once again amidst the beauty of God's creation. In case of inclement weather, the services will be moved inside and held in the sanctuary.

-We will collect a special 5th Sunday offering on Sunday, August 30 which is designated to the Pastor's Emergency Relief Fund.

-There will be a New Member Reception on Rally Day, Sunday, September 13 during our 10:30am Worship Service. Please speak to Pastor Ken if you would like more information on joining the church.

-We could use a few more weeding volunteers to help with the church flower beds. Please contact the church office if you would like to help. Many hands make light work.

-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.

-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 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!

PRAYER CONCERNS: All those earnestly seeking God's help in difficult times, Military personnel & National leaders, *family and friends of Donna Bowen*, Dick Clauser, Brenda, John Borchick, Ron Koch, Brian Moyer, Earl Phillips

CANCER PATIENTS: Rev. Gene Aulenbach, Al Basci, James Connelly, Bill Dobrolsky, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Glennis Eifert, Kristen Gately, 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, Meir Mazuz, Nicole McFarland-Bish, Tara Moss, Judy Ohl, Dana Osborne, Nick Reading, Pat Reading, Amy Reed, Noah Richardson, Jen Semenco, Jim Thompson, Tim Wapinsky, Brian Wood

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, JULY 26

Sunday, July 26

9:30 AM -Outdoor Worship

Sunday, August 2

9:30 AM -Worship with the Sacrament of Holy Communion

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalm 17:1-7, 15

Isaiah 55:1-5

Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21

Romans 9:1-5

Matthew 14:13-21

QR Code for Online Giving

Our members, friends, and visitors give their offerings and donations to the church in many different ways, including electronically via apps like Tithe.ly and bank transfers. To accommodate the varied ways of giving, we have an offering box at the rear of the sanctuary for placing Sunday morning offerings as you enter or leave. We will also have ushers accept offerings during the Offertory as another option. Thank you for your financial support of the ministries of St. Paul's and your faithful giving in response to what God has given us!

