

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, August 30, 2026



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

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Outdoor Worship and the 5th Sunday Offering (Pastor Emergency Relief)

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer, from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar, **Christian Education and Faith Formation.**

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 the Lord.

People: Call on God’s holy name.

Pastor: Sing praises to the Lord.

People: Tell of God’s wondrous deeds.

Pastor: Let the faithful sing of the Lord’s awesome power.

People: Let the hearts of the faithful rejoice.

Pastor: Give thanks to the Lord.

People: Call on God’s holy name. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 16.....“The God of Abraham Praise”

*The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above;
the ancient of eternal days, the God of love!*

*The Lord, the great I Am, by earth and heaven confessed,
we bow before your holy name, forever blest.*

*Your Spirit still flows free, high surging where it will;
in prophet's word you spoke of old and you speak still.
Established is your law, and changeless it shall stand,
deep writ upon the human heart, on sea or land.*

*You have eternal life implanted in the soul;
your love shall be our strength and stay, while ages roll.
We praise you, living God! We praise your holy name;
who was, and is, and is to be, fore'er the same!*

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

God of our ancestors, we aspire to live according to your call—letting love guide us, despising evil, and embracing what is good. Yet, we often struggle to distinguish right from wrong. Sometimes, we choose paths that harm life rather than nurture it. Consequently, we become hurdles instead of helpers. Forgive us and give us strength to release evil and pursue good. We ask for your presence to stay with us in our suffering and to help us be aware of others' pain. We desire you to transform our struggles into strengths and turn our stumbles into steps on our journey toward you. 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: Christ calls each of us into lives of service and hope.

People: *He equips us for these ministries and places us on the pathways of peace.*

Pastor: Rejoice! You are called by God's Son and blessed by him. 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.

ENGAGING THE WORD

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

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

Old Testament: Exodus 3:1-15

Psalm: Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 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: Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.

People: *And the Lord made his people very fruitful, and made them stronger than their foes,*

Lector: whose hearts he then turned to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants.

People: *He sent his servant Moses, and Aaron whom he had chosen.*

All: *Praise the Lord!*

Epistle Lesson: Romans 12:9-21

Gospel Lesson: Matthew 16:21-28

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."*

SERMON.....“A Godly Perspective”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 255.....“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

*Beneath the cross of Jesus I gladly take my stand—
the shadow of a mighty Rock within a weary land,
a home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day.*

*Upon that cross of Jesus my eye at times can see
the very dying form of One who suffered there for me;
and from my smitten heart with tears two wonders I confess—
the wonders of redeeming love and my unworthiness.*

*I take, O cross, your shadow for my abiding place;
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of his face,
content to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,
my sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.....Heidelberg Catechism: Questions 1, 31, and 34

Pastor: What is your only comfort in life and death?

All: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.

Pastor: Why is he called Christ, that is, the Anointed One?

All: Because he is ordained by God the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit to be our ultimate prophet and teacher, who fully reveals to us God’s secret council and will concerning our redemption, and also to be our sole high priest, who has redeemed us by the one sacrifice of his body and ever intercedes for us with the Father, and also to be our eternal king, who governs us by his word and spirit, and defends and sustains us in the redemption he has gained for us.

Pastor: Why do you call Him our Lord?

All: Because, not with gold or silver but with his precious blood, he has redeemed and purchased us body and soul from sin and the power of the devil to be his own.

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: There are so many directions in which we are being pulled.
People: We struggle and hope that we have chosen the right way.
Pastor: Some of these paths are falsely enticing and others dangerous.
People: How can we know what to do?
Pastor: Look to Jesus! He will be your guide and Holy Spirit will guard your life.
People: I am going to follow Jesus. He is the example of compassion, healing and hope.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 344.....“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

*I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus—
no turning back, no turning back.*

*The world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me—
no turning back, no turning back.*

*Though none go with me, I still will follow,
though none go with me, I still will follow,
though none go with me, I still will follow—
no turning back, no turning back.*

*Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?—
no turning back, no turning back.*

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 Kirsten Linsford from the 2025 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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-The altar flowers are in memory of Betty Brown by the Brown family.

-Offering on Sunday, August 23, 2026: \$6,472.00

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

-The August Communion Offering is designated to the Alzheimer's Association. The September Communion Offering is designated to the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox gift collection.

-We will collect a special 5th Sunday offering TODAY. It is designated to the Pastor's Emergency Relief Fund. Special envelopes are available.

-Senior Choir rehearsals have begun and continue each Wednesday at 7:00pm. New members are always welcome! Please speak to Rae Ann Borger for more information.

-It's time to register for Confirmation class. 1st year confirmation classes are available to any young adult turning 12 or entering 7th grade this year. **To register, please turn in a completed form to the church office by next Sunday, September 6.** Forms are available on the bulletin table or in the Newsletter. **Confirmation Classes will begin on Rally Day Sunday, September 13** at 9:15 AM, with a confirmand, parent and mentor meeting. At this time, confirmation requirements and expectations will be reviewed with confirmands, their parents and mentors signing the Confirmation Covenant. A blessing of the Confirmands will be conducted during the Worship service following the meeting. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Pastor Ken.

-Worship Services will resume at 10:30am next Sunday, September 6. There will be **no** Sunday School on September 6. **Sunday School will resume at 9:15am on Rally Day, September 13.**

-The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room beginning on **Tuesday, September 8.** 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.

-Board of Christian Education Meeting: A Board of Christian Education meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 8, at 7:00pm. During this meeting, a vote will be taken on proposed amendments to the Board of Christian Education Constitution and Bylaws to align board terms with the Sunday School year. This change is intended to provide greater continuity in planning, leadership, and support for our Christian Education ministries throughout the school year. All members of the congregation are welcome to attend. If you have any questions or would like to review the proposed amendments before the meeting, please contact Laura Carll at (484) 269-4405.

-Everyone is invited to the Lutheran Church on Saturday, September 12 at 5pm for a worship service, annual picnic and musical entertainment by singer/guitarist, Dave Hartranft. Eating will be indoors, and music will be outside the church pavilion. Bring a chair and bring a friend! You're also welcome to bring a favorite food dish, but it is not expected.

-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.

-Mark Your Calendars for Sunday School Rally Day on Sunday, September 13! All are invited and encouraged to attend and there is something for everyone as we begin a new year of faith, learning, and fellowship.

Sunday School will resume this day for children and adults and continue each Sunday at 9:15am, followed by worship at 10:30am. Confirmation classes will also begin at 9:15am with a meeting for confirmands, parents, and mentors. During our 10:30am worship service, we will offer a blessing for our Sunday School teachers, leaders, and confirmands as they begin a new year of ministry and faith formation and a New Member Reception. After worship, we will gather in the church picnic grove for food, fellowship, and fun! Hamburgers, hot dogs, and snacks will be provided. Feel free to bring a favorite dish or dessert to share, along with a lawn chair, blanket, or kid-friendly outdoor games if you wish. We look forward to celebrating the start of a new year together. We hope you'll join us!

-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, September 14** beginning at 8:30am and **Friday, September 18** beginning at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling, Bill Reber or the church office.

-There will be a Blood Drive sponsored by the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches on Thursday, September 17 from 1-6pm at Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Schuylkill Haven. Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: Haven, to schedule an appointment.

-Sunday, September 20 is “Bring your motorcycle to church” Sunday. A group ride will follow the service. Spread the word, invite your friends, and join us for some fun and fellowship. If you would like to be notified of other rides, please notify the church office to be added to the “Biker” email list!

-On Sunday, September 20, we will collect the special offering to support the ministries of Bethany Children's Home. Offering envelopes will be available on the table by the bulletins.

-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, ***Caitie Handling***, Ilene Witmier, Dick Clauser, Silas Meck, Ronnie Mengel, 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, AUGUST 30

Sunday, August 30 -5th Sunday Offering for the Pastor's Emergency Relief Fund

Monday, August 31

6:00 PM -Boy Scout Meetings

Wednesday, September 2

7:00 PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, September 6 -Resume regular worship time (NO Sunday School until September 13)

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

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalms 149

Ezekiel 33:7-11

Psalms 119:33-40

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

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!

