ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, November 15, 2026

The Parable of the Talents



1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922
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Livestream: www.facebook.com/summerhillucc

1782 **244 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE** **2026**

Sunday, November 15, 2026 10:30am

Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger
Organist- Colin Andrew

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **Christ, Barnesville** 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.

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung "Amen"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Raise your eyes to the God of heaven and earth.
People: We raise our hearts and voices with songs of praise.
Pastor: Awaken your mind to the mysteries of God.
People: We open ourselves to listen and learn in new ways.
Pastor: Notice your blessings and gifts, miraculously given by God.
People: We offer our lives and gifts to bless and grow God's love in the world. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 138……..……"Holy God, We Praise Your Name"

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN **(Unison)**

Wise and Holy God, we want to be wise like Deborah and the wise leaders of old. We want to be wise like Jesus and the disciples who built your church. We want to be wise like you, but your ways are so mysterious that they sometimes confuse us. Forgive our confusion. Help us see clearly and brightly, led by the light of your Son, Christ Jesus. Strengthen us to live the wisdom you offer, that our gifts and talents may grow and expand your kingdom of love each day. In faith and trust, 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

Pastor: The God of mercy hears our prayers and holds them close.
People: When we wander away into places of death and despair, God is always ready to bring us back.
Pastor: For no matter where we go or what we do, we belong to God and God is there for us.
People: We belong to the one who clothes us in faith and hope and love.
Pastor: So rejoice, for you are the forgiven and beloved children of God. 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, Brook Koch-Guers

Old Testament:	Judges 4:1-7	(Page 211)
Psalm:	Psalm 123	**(Read Responsively)**

Lector: To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens!
People: As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress;
Lector: So our eyes look to the Lord our God, until he has mercy upon us.
People: Have mercy upon us, O Lord,
Lector: Have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt.
People: Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Epistle:	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	(Page 1031)
Gospel:	Matthew 25:14-30	(Page 860)

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……."Bless His Holy Name" -Words, Music and Arrangement by Tom Fettke

SERMON.....“Just When You Thought…”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 479……..“Near the Cross”

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison).....Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. 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: You know what time it is.
People: It's time to get to work.
Pastor: It's time to follow Christ.
People: It's time to go where God leads.
Pastor: It's time to offer ourselves.
People: And time to bring love to the world.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 572.....“God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending”

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 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 honor of Bob and Brook Guers Anniversary by Deb Koch and family. (Their Anniversary is November 17)

-The bulletins are in memory of Marvin and Irene Miller by the Mengel family.

-Offering on Sunday, November 8, 2026: $2,717.00
-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2026: $3,368.52

-The November Communion Offering is designated to Servants to All- "My Father's House" which is a nonprofit organization that provides homeless services in Schuylkill County.

-**The ANNUAL GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER orders are due TODAY.** Order forms are available on the table in the Narthex of the church. **Delivery of purchases will be Sunday, December 6th.** Any questions about this sale, please speak to Rae Ann Borger.

-Newsletter articles for the combined December 2026 and January 2027 newsletter are due TODAY.

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

-The Boy Scout Troop is doing Wreaths Across America. The sponsorship cost for a wreath is $17. Please use the following link to order online: www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/PA1030P. You may also speak to Lorna Palerino to order directly. **The cut-off date for direct orders is tomorrow, November 16th, and for online orders is December 2.** Please see the flyer on the church bulletin board in the narthex.

-The Consistory meeting will be held this Tuesday, November 17 at 7:00pm in the conference room.

-Veterans, you're invited to a Veterans Outpatient Clinic this Wednesday, November 18 from 10am-12 noon. It will be held at the Schuylkill County VA on 1410 Laurel Blvd., Suite 2, Pottsville. Meet and connect with Victoria Spitler, Schuylkill County Veterans Affairs Director. See the flyer on the bulletin board.

-**Order forms for Christmas poinsettias are available on the table in the narthex.** The cost is $11.00 each and they are coming from Kreider's Nursery. There are NO standing orders. If you always placed one in the past, you must re-order again this year. Money must accompany the order at the time it is placed. **The order deadline is next Sunday, November 22.** Please give all orders & money to Lori Moyer, Ardith Moyer or the church office.

-We will decorate the church for Advent/Christmas next Sunday, November 22 following Worship. Help is needed to not only decorate, but to carry the many boxes out of the attic. If you are able, please stay and lend a hand– get in the holiday spirit too!!

-**We will once again be collecting new or gently used hats, gloves and scarves to be given to those in need. All items will need to be received by Sunday, December 6**, and can be placed on the Christmas tree or in the box that will be located in the back of the sanctuary next **Sunday**. Please speak to Kelly Palerino for info.

-**Jerusalem Lutheran Church will be holding a Thanksgiving Community Service and Choir Festival on Sunday, November 22**, at 3:00 PM. All are invited!

-**This year we are helping Schuylkill County Children & Youth in Pottsville for Christmas.** There are still children's names on the nursey windows to pick from. **All gifts need to be returned back to the church by Sunday, December 6.** Please place gifts in the back of the Sanctuary. All you need to do is: 1. Pick a child, 2. Write your name on the paper with the corresponding number, 3. Wrap gifts, stick in garbage bag with the tag attached to the bag. Thank you for helping a child have a great Christmas. Any Questions, please ask Amy Zimmerman.

-**A joint (with our Lutheran friends) Thanksgiving Eve worship service with the Sacrament of Holy Communion will be held on Wednesday, November 25 at** 7:00pm. The service will be held at St. Paul's Summer Hill Lutheran Church, with Pastor Ken giving the message and Pastor Marie leading the service.

-We are looking for young artists to draw bulletin cover artwork: Children of all ages are invited to take part in the creation of biblically based (either Advent or the biblical account of the Christmas story) worship bulletin cover artwork, which will be used throughout the season of Advent and Christmas. Colorful drawings are encouraged, but we can also use black and white sketches. Children should print their first and last name somewhere on the front of the drawing. **A special recognition of children who participate will take place during the December 20 worship service.** The drawings will be used as bulletin covers beginning on the First Sunday of Advent which is **November 29.** Please either scan and email your child's drawing, or drop them off at the church office. Please see Kelly, call or email the church office if you need more information.

-**You are invited to an Ecumenical Christmas Cantata featuring the Zion Festival Orchestra on Sunday, November 29** at 7:30pm. "All Is Well- A Christmas Musical" will be held at Zion UCC Church, 225 Iron Street, Lehighton, PA 18235. Members of our choir will be participating in this annual musical Cantata.

-**The Summer Hill Youth Group will gather Friday, December 4** from 6–8:30 PM at St. Paul's Summer Hill UCC to assemble five-gallon Disaster Relief Buckets for people in need. Youth will learn about serving their neighbors while working together in a fun, friendly relay-race competition! Food will be provided. RSVP to Laura Carll at (484) 269-4405 is appreciated but not required.

-**St. Paul's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 6** following Worship **(the snow date will be Sunday, December 13).** The purpose of the meeting will be to review and vote on the proposed budget for 2027, and to elect new Consistory members. Please plan on attending this very important meeting.

-**On Sunday, December 6 we will be Christmas Caroling to the shut-ins and elderly.** We will be joining our sister congregation, St. Paul's Lutheran Church for this event. Everyone is invited to join us. We will be carpooling and leaving from St. Paul's UCC at 2:00pm. Please speak to Pastor Ken for more information.

-**Mark your calendars for Sunday, December 13 for our Church Christmas Party sponsored by the Sunday School.** The party will follow our 10:30am worship that day. Hot Dogs and fix'ins will be provided along with drinks and snacks. You are welcome to bring your favorite treat or covered dish to share, but it is not necessary to bring anything other than yourself! Come enjoy the fun as we welcome our special visitor, Santa! Kids will receive a goodie bag. If you have any questions, please speak to any Sunday School teacher or Board of Christian Education Chairperson, Laura Carll. **The snow date for the party is Sunday, December 20.**

-The Bulletin and Altar Flower Sponsor List for 2027 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.

-**Shut-In Mailing Sponsorship 2027:** 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 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, ***Brad Epler, Dave Heim, Nicole Laocuv,*** Marci Luckenbill-Felty, Marion Bartolet, Mikayla, Lou Borgatta, Verna Fidler, Autumn, Taylor and Parker, Joe Palerino, Donald Rubinkam, Ron Koch, Dick Clauser, Ronnie Mengel, Brian Moyer, Earl Phillips

CANCER PATIENTS: Rev. Gene Aulenbach, Al Basci, James Connelly, Bill Dobrolsky, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Glennis Eifert, Kristen Gately, Chelsea Garven, 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

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
Sunday, November 15 -Deadline for gift card orders
4:00 PM -Cub Scout Pack Meeting
Monday, November 16
8:30 AM -Help at the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry
Tuesday, November 17
7:00 PM -Consistory Meeting

Wednesday, November 18
7:00 PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal
Friday, November 20
9:00 AM - Help at the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry
Sunday, November 22 -Reign of Christ Sunday -Poinsettia order deadline
9:15 AM -Sunday School
10:30 AM -Worship
-Decorate the church following worship
4:00 PM -Cub Scout Den Meetings

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
Psalm 100
Psalm 95:1-7a
Ephesians 1:15-23
Matthew 25:31-46

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!