



St. Paul's Summer Hill UCC

October 2024 Newsletter



Pastor's Page

Greetings Summer Hill!

Thank you for being true to our calling to be a faith community that extends the love of Christ to all with grace, peace, and faith. I want you to know how much I appreciate your continued support of the ministries of St. Paul's, and your willingness to be the Body of Christ here on earth as we work towards the Kingdom of God. As I continue to have conversations with other pastors and see endless reports from church newsletters and studies about the decline of the church, I realize what a special congregation we are. A recent report on giving showed that small to medium churches like ours continue to experience declines in membership, attendance, and giving making it difficult to sustain their ministries.

As a rural congregation, we also face the additional challenges of living far from services and resources that many larger city churches have available, which includes the availability of people to reach out to. It is no secret that churches are the people who choose to gather together, not the building in which they gather, so to be a viable faith community for years to come we must have participation from all of our members.

Unfortunately, many of the churches within Schuylkill County are experiencing a decline in all of these areas which is compounded by a shortage of ordained clergy. Most of the pastors in our Schuylkill Association serve more than one congregation and some of our pastors are licensed and not ordained. St. Mark's Cressona and St. John's Schuylkill Haven just lost their pastor, adding to the shortage in our area. Many congregations are experiencing extreme financial difficulties. Other denominations are also struggling, not just the United Church of Christ.

Now, on the bright side, this is nothing new for the church. Throughout the past 2,000 years the church has survived all sorts of difficult trials and

tribulations, and I have no concerns about the future of God's church. It will survive and flourish just as God has planned. However, there are many individual congregations that will fade away, and many others that simply will not have pastors, if the downward trend in giving and participation does not reverse soon.

As Jesus said in Matthew 9:36-38, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." (NRSV)

We at St. Paul's Summer Hill are very blessed. We have dedicated people that work very hard and many that give of their time, talent, and financial resources. Our sister church next door just installed Pastor Marie Meeks, and our combined Confirmation Class has 18 Confirmands! We have an active and growing Sunday School program. Weekly we see new faces worshiping with us, and although we are still behind budget, giving is up overall from last year.

I give thanks to God for all the blessings we have and I am very hopeful for the future. What we really need is full participation from all of our members to help us remain the shining light on Summer Hill for generations to come. If you have not been to church in a while, get back in the habit of worshiping with us each week. Invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join us. Find ways to get involved and experience the joy of helping those in need. There are a lot of wonderful ministries going on, and everyone is welcome.

There's no time like the present to answer God's calling for you to be an active member of the Body of Christ. I promise, once you get started, you will wonder why you did not start sooner. I look forward to seeing you at church!

Hopeful for the future blessings,
Pastor Ken

Offering Collection

Our members, friends and visitors give their offerings and donations to the church in many different ways, to include electronically via apps like Tithe.ly and bank transfers. Some give quarterly, monthly or weekly. To help accommodate the varied ways of giving, we have placed an offering box in the narthex as well as offering plates by the pews in the rear of the sanctuary to place Sunday morning offerings as you enter or leave the sanctuary. However, we have heard that some forget to drop their offerings off, while visitors may be unaware of the remote offering collection. The Consistory has decided that we will continue to have the offering box and plates to drop off your offering before or after the service, but we will also have two ushers accept offerings during the Hymn of Reflection after the sermon 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!

Communion Offerings

The October Communion offering will support the families affected by the Tremont Fire.

The November Communion offering will support My Father's House.

Boy Scout Troop Fundraiser

The Boy Scout Troop 651 is having a dine out day fundraiser at the Friedensburg Country Restaurant on **Tuesday, October 1**. Dine out cards are available on the bulletin table in the church narthex.

Neighbors in Need Offering

Sunday, October 6 is World Wide Communion Sunday, and on that day we will receive the annual Neighbors in Need Offering, the 3rd of 4 special offerings taken for the national church. One-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. In 2024, the Neighbors in

Need theme is "Mental Health Justice For All!" Offering envelopes will be available on the bulletin table in the church narthex.



Ending Hunger One Step at a Time!

World Communion Sunday

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1 PM

Registration begins at 12:30 PM.

The CWS CROP Walk begins and ends at the Council of Churches of Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry, 110 W. Market St., Schuylkill Haven, next to the Walk In Art Center

Prayer Shawl Committee

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. The next meeting will be **Tuesday, October 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.

Budget Committee Meeting

There will be a budget committee meeting to begin planning the 2025 budget on **Tuesday, October 8** beginning at 6pm.

Fellowship Time

Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 10:30am worship service on **Sunday, October 13**. 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. And best of all, it's free of charge!!

Youth Hiking Adventure/ Sunday School Raffle

Summer Hill Youth Group: Youth ages K-12 are invited to join in a hiking adventure at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary on **Sunday, October 13**. (Rain date is **October 20**) This is a free event! The group will meet at 1:30pm and enjoy an exciting day of hiking, learning, connecting with nature and making new friends. Youth must be accompanied by a responsible chaperone. Please speak to Laura Carll (484-269-4405) for more information.

Every week that our youth participate in Sunday School, they will get a raffle ticket that will be entered into a drawing for a prize. Drawings will then happen quarterly at the Youth Group Events. (winners do not need to be present) Prize #1 is an outdoor pack and the winner will be drawn at the Hawk Mountain hike on **Sunday, October 13**.

Schuylkill Haven Area Food Pantry

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. **NO OUTDATED FOOD PLEASE**. We will be helping **Monday, October 14** at 8:30am and **Friday, October 18** at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

Consistory Meeting

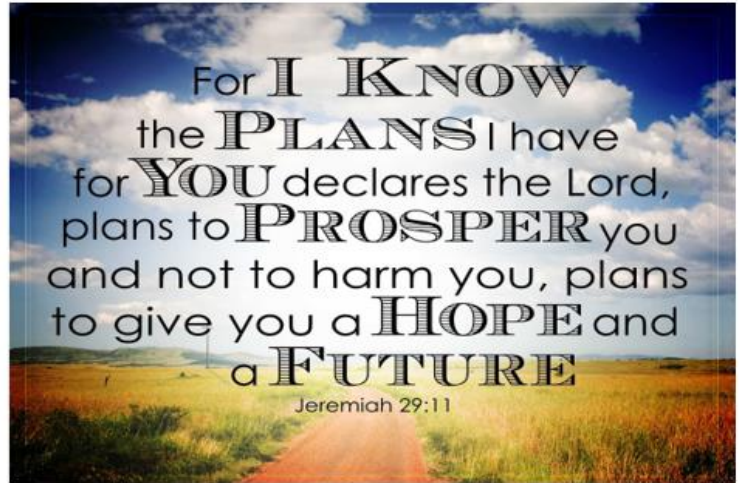
The next Consistory Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 15** at 7:00pm.



A Future with Hope

The Schuylkill Association

of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
of the United Church of Christ



Fall Meeting, Sunday, October 20

2:30 PM Registration and Fellowship

3 PM Worship and Meeting

St. John United Church of Christ

150 Pine Street, Tamaqua, PA, 18252

Motorcycle Ministry

Sunday, October 27 is "Bring your motorcycle to church" Sunday, and a group ride will follow worship that day. 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 year, please notify the church office to have your name added to the "Biker" email list!

All Saints' Day and Offering

This year we will celebrate All Saints' Day on **Sunday, November 3**. That morning during the service of worship and communion, we will honor the saints of our congregation who passed away in the past year. We will also collect the All Saints Offering, which assists retired pastors from our conference who are in need of financial assistance. You do not need a special envelope, although they are available from the church office or by the bulletin basket closer to the collection date. You can make a note or write it on your regular offering envelopes.

Outdoor Church Clean-up

Mark your calendars! We need your help!! Our outdoor church grounds fall clean-up day will be on **Saturday, November 16** at 9:00am. With enough help, we can have it completed in just a few hours! Bring rakes, tarps, clippers and pruners. Invite your friends and family and neighbors too!

College Students

When you know your address (or your child's) and email for the upcoming school year, please share this information with the church office- call, email at summerhillucc@gmail.com or just write it down and put it in the mail slot on the secretary's office door. We would like to have your information so we can continue to send the Newsletter, church mail and various emails. Thank you, and have a great school year!!

CPR/AED Certification

If you are CPR/AED certified, please contact the church office. We are updating our church certification list for our AED machine on site.



Your Consistory met on September 17, 2024 and discussed the following items:

Briefly mentioned the fairly large group for the 2024-2025 Confirmation class

Mentioned the continued improvements to our indoor and outdoor facilities as well as improvements to our alarm/security systems and wi-fi connectivity.

Discussed the recognition of Harvest Home during a worship service in November

Mentioned the fixing of the basement windows as well as an update to the motor repairs for the church bell

October Communion offering will support the families affected by the Tremont Fire

November Communion offering will support My Father's House

December Communion offering will support Samaritan's Purse

The next Consistory Mtg. will be held on October 15, 2024.

Respectfully yours,
Trevor Smith, Secretary

Sunday School

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." -Romans 8:28

On Sunday, Oct 13th, 2024 "The Summer Hill Youth Group" will meet at Hawk Mountain @ 1:30pm for a hike and a presentation. All Kindergarten-12th grade are invited, chaperone is needed for younger children. Children who have been coming to Sunday School and put their names in for the raffle, will get a named pulled for an outdoor prize

Christian Education Secretary,
Amy Zimmerman

AV System Volunteers

We are still looking for some additional people to help run our sound and video equipment on a Sunday morning! Please let us know if you would be willing to help. We will then figure out a good mutual time to "train" those who are interested! Ideally, we will get a few people interested, and then sign up for Sundays either on a weekly or monthly basis, somewhat like the lectors.

Altar Prep Volunteers

We are still in need of altar prep volunteers. Everyone is welcome! It will be a rotation schedule on a weekly basis. You can sign up for one week or multiple weeks. Your assistance is needed to change the altar paraments, make sure altar flowers are changed and the oil candles are filled. "Training" will be provided! It's a minimal commitment, but a great help in keeping our services running smoothly. If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please speak to Kelly Palerino.

St Paul's UCC

YOU'VE BEEN CHALLENGED

31 DAYS OF GIVING

FOOD DRIVE

31 DAYS, 31 HOUSEHOLDS, 31 FOOD ITEMS

***THIS LIST IS A GUIDE:** While following the list will make it easier to provide families with similar boxes filled with items covering all three meals in a day and some Thanksgiving Day needs, ANY 31 non-perishable items are GREATLY appreciated!*

1. Box of oatmeal
2. Box Cereal
3. Box Cereal
4. Pancake Mix
5. Pancake syrup
6. Packet or Box of Muffin Mix
7. Peanut butter
8. Jelly
9. Ramen Noodles
10. Can of soup
11. Can of soup
12. Boxed potatoes
13. Boxed potatoes
14. Boxed stuffing
15. Boxed stuffing
16. Can of corn
17. Can of corn
18. Can of green beans
19. Can of green beans
20. Can of peas
21. Can of peas
22. Can of cranberry sauce
23. Box of cornbread mix
24. Box of brownie mix
25. Box of Mac n Cheese
26. Box of Mac n Cheese
27. Box of Pasta
28. Pasta Sauce
29. Can of gravy or Packet of Gravy Mix
30. Bottle of juice
31. Applesauce

Collection dates October 1 through October 31
All donations due by November 3rd so items can be prepared in time to meet family's Thanksgiving needs.

Please feel free to drop off your donation at the back of the sanctuary or contact Brook Koch-Guers at 570-449-0825 to schedule a pick-up of your donation from your home. Can't do the shopping yourself? If you make a donation the Guers family will shop for you and send you a copy of the receipt for your donation.

STEWARDSHIP

Your Consistory thanks each and every one of you for your faithful support during a very difficult year with continued inflation and a very sluggish economy. We know it is not easy. Many churches continue to experience extreme declines in both attendance and financial support, forcing them to cut back on services provided, staff, and support of local and worldwide ministries. Some churches are entering into shared ministry agreements with nearby congregations or utilizing part time or Lay Ministers for their pastoral needs, while others have lost their pastors or will be closing permanently.

But because of your continued support of St. Paul's with your time, talent, and treasure, we are weathering these tumultuous times far better than most. We have not eliminated any services or ministries and the Consistory is working to reduce costs wherever possible. We all should be very grateful for the work of all of our volunteers who dedicate so much of their time to keeping our church strong.

Our congregation has stepped up to meet the challenge with giving up over last year at this time by over \$5,000. However, costs have risen faster than the increased giving and we are behind our budget by about \$15,000 at this point. During times like this, it is easy to become disheartened and to be tempted to impose drastic austerity measures to meet these challenges.

The good news is that any possible fiscal concerns are easily overcome by working together, with each of us helping where we can as God has gifted us to do. With just a small increase in each of our weekly giving, we can ensure that our doors will be open to help our families and friends grow in Christ for many years to come.

The table below shows the impact that a small weekly increase in giving would make overall.

If this number of Giving Units	Gave this much more each week.....					
	\$1	\$5	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$25
131	\$6,812	\$34,060	\$68,120	\$102,180	\$136,240	\$170,300
100	\$5,200	\$26,000	\$52,000	\$78,000	\$104,000	\$130,000
80	\$4,160	\$20,800	\$41,600	\$62,400	\$83,200	\$104,000
60	\$3,120	\$15,600	\$31,200	\$46,800	\$62,400	\$78,000
40	\$2,080	\$10,400	\$20,800	\$31,200	\$41,600	\$52,000
20	\$1,040	\$5,200	\$10,400	\$15,600	\$20,800	\$26,000
We could add this much to our yearly Giving!!						

Please prayerfully consider if you are able to help us help those in need and continue to spread the Good News of the Gospel through an increase in your tithes and offerings. Together, we can all continue to make a difference!

The Consistory of St. Paul's

Special Dates

- Pastor Appreciation Month
- World Communion Sunday, *October 6, 2024*
- Columbus Day, *October 14, 2024*
- Indigenous Peoples Day, *October 14, 2024*
- Reformation Sunday, *October 27, 2024*
- Reformation Day, *October 31, 2024*

Pastors Appreciate Your Prayers

October is Pastor Appreciation Month, an observance that some clergy don't publicize. It's an ideal time to thank pastors for their dedication to God's people and the ministry. A written note, a card or even a free meal is a nice gesture of appreciation. But if you were to ask pastors what they'd like or what they need, most would probably reply, "Pray for me."

That's what the apostle Paul requested throughout his letters. To the church at Rome, he urged, "Join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company" (Romans 15:30-32, NRSV).

As you appreciate and encourage your pastors, remember them in your prayers. Then let them know you're doing so!

Thank You!!

-to Kathleen Reber for sponsoring the shut-in mailing for October

-to Bill Reber for mowing the church lawn in September. We appreciate all your work in keeping the church lawn looking beautiful!

-to our weeding elf for keeping our flower beds beautiful

-to the Thrivent Choice member for the deposit of \$128.00

-Dear St. Paul's UCC,

Thank you! Through your generous support of Mike Fessler and his walk to support the Alzheimer's Association, you truly made a difference in our mission. Thank you for your support as we continue our important work in providing Alzheimer's care and support and accelerating research.

Best, Clayton Jacobs



- 1 - Nathan Crouse
- 2 - Joshua Nagle
- 3 - Connor Palerino
- 4 - Dean Dewald
 - Skye Heim
- 5 - Silas Meck
- 7 - Paige Koch
- 6 - David Smith
- 9 - Kathleen Reber
 - William Barnes
- 13 - Casey Horvath
- 14 - Ardith Moyer
 - Dustin F. Faust
- 15 - Suzanne Koperna
- 16 - Clint Clauser
 - Jill Brossman
 - Tom Saunders
- 17 - Debbie Clauser
- 18 - Kassandra Hower
- 19 - John Ulsh
- 20 - Carol Ann Mengel
 - Franklin Reichert
- 21 - Craig Borger
 - Verna Fidler
 - Nicholas Horvath
- 22 - Donna Koch
 - Ray Koch
 - Elaine Reichert
- 23 - Tom Nagle
- 25 - Aaron Rodnick
- 26 - Debbie Deibert
- 27 - Jackie Fessler
- 28 - Amy Rubinkam
- 30 - Blake Frantz
 - Gabriel Crouse
 - Kevin Richards



3 - Guy and Nancy Fidler
7 - Lucille and Ronald Faust
10 - Jeff and Kelly Palerino
11- Mike and Snipps Reber
13- Mark and Stephanie Palerino
14 - Mike and Jackie Fessler
18 - Scott and Jill Cutter
19 - Tammy and Roger Krause
 - Ronald and Donna Tranosky
22 - Adam and Laura Carll
 - Scott and Stephany Krause
27 - Lee and Florence Moyer
29 - Robert and Melissa Eckert
30 - Brock and Pam Koch

Lectionary Readings:

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost, October 6

Job 1:1, 2:1-10
Psalm 26
Genesis 2:18-24
Psalm 8
Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12
Mark 10:2-16

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost, October 13

Job 23:1-9, 16-17
Psalm 22:1-15
Amos 5:6-7, 10-15
Psalm 90:12-17
Hebrews 4:12-16
Mark 10:17-31

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost, Oct. 20

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)
Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35c
Isaiah 53:4-12
Psalm 91:9-16
Hebrews 5:1-10
Mark 10:35-45

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost, Oct. 27

Job 42:1-6, 10-17
Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)
Jeremiah 31:7-9

Psalm 126
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 10:46-52

All Saints Day, November 1

Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9
Isaiah 25:6-9
Psalm 24
Revelation 21:1-6a
John 11:32-44

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost, November 3

Ruth 1:1-18
Psalm 146
Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Psalm 119:1-8
Hebrews 9:11-14
Mark 12:28-34

The Mess of Mercy

The reformer Martin Luther once dreamed that he saw Jesus approaching his door. Luther panicked, seeing that his home was an absolute disaster inside. “How am I going to let the Lord of Life, Jesus Christ, come into a mess like this?” he wondered.

Luther raced to clean up, but the mess only increased. As Jesus knocked, Luther was resigned. “Come on in, if you think you can come into a place like this,” he told Jesus ... only to turn around and see that everything was now in order. All Luther had to do was let Jesus enter.

“Mercy is always a messy business,” writes pastor Daniel Emery Price at 1517.org. That’s true of the Reformation, just as it was when Jesus cleared moneychangers out of the temple. “There will always be those who condemn the mercy because of the mess,” notes Price. “Reformation is always about clearing the path to God’s radical grace.”

***“It is great wisdom
to know how to be silent.”***

—John of the Cross

The Heart of a Volunteer

A daughter had just helped her 90-year-old mother through the complex process of moving from and selling the family home. Now in a senior living center, the once-active woman was adjusting to her new surroundings and lifestyle.

As the daughter finalized arrangements, she tactfully brought up matters of nutrition. Hoping her mom would accept some help, she asked, “What about Meals on Wheels?”

Mom replied, “No, dear. I don’t think I can volunteer for them anymore.”

Bible Quiz

When Jesus asks a Samaritan woman for a drink, at which site related to the ancient Israelites is he resting?

- A. the edge of the Jordan River
- B. beside the Red Sea
- C. Jacob’s well
- D. the Pool of Bethesda

Answer: C (See John 4:6.)

Christian Symbol



CHRISTIAN FLAG

— Dating to the early 20th century, the Christian flag represents all of Christianity, though it’s been used primarily in the Americas and Africa. The red Latin cross symbolizes Jesus’ blood shed on Calvary to grant us eternal life. The blue background represents Christ’s faithfulness even unto death, as well as our baptism into Christ. The white field signifies Jesus’ purity, nonviolence and surrender to God’s will, plus the peace we gain by surrendering ourselves to Christ.

Common Ground

“Christianity was never intended to be a solo walk with God,” says pastor Jeremy Basset. “A conversion to Christianity is also incorporation in the body of Christ, the church.”

That’s a fitting reminder as we observe World Communion Sunday in October. Christians don’t take Holy Communion alone; the very name of this sacrament refers to unity with God and others. We don’t baptize ourselves. We don’t learn Scripture or Christian theology and history alone. We can’t have Christian fellowship by ourselves.

The New Testament is clear that one cannot be a solitary Christian. We are members of Christ’s body (Ephesians 5:30) and “belong to the family of believers” (Galatians 6:10, NIV). As you gather for worship and receive Holy Communion, thank God for “our common salvation” (Jude 3, ESV) granted to all followers of Jesus.

Pumpkin Prayer

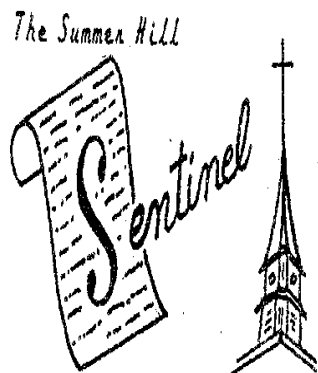


In *The Pumpkin Patch Parable*, Liz Curtis Higgs uses kid-friendly analogies for the Christian life. Many parents now use a Pumpkin Prayer while carving jack-o-lanterns in October. What a great reminder about everything God has done for us!

- While cutting off the pumpkin top, pray, “Lord, open my mind so I can learn new things about you.” (See Proverbs 1:7.)
- While removing the seeds and pulp, pray, “Remove the things in my life that don’t please you. Forgive the wrong things I do and help me forgive others.” (See Matthew 6:14-15.)
- While making eyes, pray, “Open my eyes to see the beauty you’ve made in the world around me.” (See Psalm 104:24.)
- While making the nose, pray, “I’m sorry for the times I’ve turned up my nose at your many gifts.” (See James 1:17.)
- While making the mouth, pray, “Let everything I say please you.” (See Psalm 19:14.)
- While lighting the candle, pray, “Lord, help me shine your light to others through the things I do.” (See Matthew 5:16.)
- Display your carved pumpkins as examples of how God’s love transforms us into new creations. (See 2 Corinthians 5:17)

October 2024

**St. Paul's United Church of Christ
1235 Summer Hill Road
Auburn, PA 17922**



Church Phone: 570-754-7225
Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor: 610-207-4783
Office Hours: Tues.– Friday 9am - 2pm
Email: summerhillucc@gmail.com
Website: www.summerhillucc.com

Address Service Requested

Visit the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference –
www.psec.org
Visit the United Church of Christ – www.ucc.org

Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Ken McDowell
Church Administrator & Cleaning: Kelly
Palerino
Music Director/ Pianist: Rae Ann Borger
Organists: Jacob Challenger/ Colin Andrew
(Supply)

Lay Leaders

Consistory President: Pam Clauser
Consistory Vice President: Jeff Palerino
Secretary: Trevor Smith
Assistant Secretary: Mike Fessler
Treasurer: Lori Moyer
Financial Secretary: Kathy Kline

Board of Christian Education:
Chairperson - Laura Carll
Vice-Chairperson - Vicky Borger
Secretary - Amy Zimmerman
Sunday Morning Coordinator: Trevor Smith
Assistant Sunday Coordinator: David Deibert
Stewardship/Mission: Lori Moyer, Tom
and Terri Saunders, Kathy Kline, Carol
Mengel and Trevor Smith
Budget Committee: Pam Clauser
Personnel Committee: Lori Moyer
Prayer Shawl Ministry Chair: Nancy Dewald

October 2024