

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, December 1, 2024



1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922

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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am–2pm; Closed Friday

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**First Sunday of Advent
The Sacrament of Holy Communion**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger
Organist- Colin Andrew

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **Faith, Delano** from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar.

Please read the announcements that are in this downloadable bulletin, as well as those we post on our Facebook site, our emails, and our phone calls, and then help spread the word to those who do not have access to any of those messages.

(Communion note: This morning, as some of us are gathered together here at church while many are gathering with us virtually from their homes, we all are invited to the same table. Those present this morning are invited to pick up a bag of individually prepared elements from the table in the narthex, as we will not be distributing the elements during the service. Those at home may gather bread and drink and partake as we do when we are gathered together.)

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Advent Scripture - Isaiah 60:2-7

Lighting the Advent Candle

Prayer

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175..... *“We Light the Advent Candles”* (Verses 1&2)

*We light the Advent candles against the winter night,
to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light,
to welcome our Lord Jesus who is the world's True Light.*

*The first one will remind us that Christ will soon return.
We light it in the darkness and watch it gleam and burn,
We light it in the darkness and watch it gleam and burn.*

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Our promised salvation is at hand.

People: A righteous branch has sprung forth, bringing hope to our world.

Pastor: Our eyes have beheld the goodness and mercy of the Lord.

People: A Son has been given to us, bringing justice and virtue to our land.

Pastor: Our hearts have felt the stirrings of God’s Presence.

People: The Spirit of truth is here to heal us, teaching transgressors God’s ways.

Pastor: Let us worship the God of our salvation. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 154.....“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Almighty God, your promises of old strengthen us during these dark times. We yearn to learn to read the signs of your coming: in the sun, moon, and stars; in the roaring of the seas and the waves; and in the tumult of our world. Yet, we have seen it all before and nothing seems to change. We long to live with courage in an age where wars are fought for peace and freedoms are stripped in the name of liberty. Grant us the wisdom that comes from waiting, and teach us the patience that leads to godliness as our savior draws near. 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 days are coming", says the prophet, "when all God's promises will be fulfilled."

People: These promises of hope, peace, joy, and love are for all of God's children.

Pastor: Receive the hope that God offers to you today and rejoice, for we are forgiven. 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

PRAAYER OF ILLUMINATION

READING OF THE WORD:.....Lector, Mike Rubinkam

Gospel: Luke 21:25-36 (Page 915)

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....."Give Thanks" with "O Come, Let Us Adore Him" by Phillip Keveren
Flute Soloist- Brandi Kline

SERMON....."The Beginning of the Beginning"

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 190....."Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;
he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. 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

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

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation:

The Communion Prayer:

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Pastor: We thank you, O God, that from the very beginning your Word has been the light and life of the world.
Through your Word all things were made, and by your Word we shall be made new.

People: Come, Lord Jesus!

Pastor: We remember that in every age you have called matriarchs, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs to
bear witness to the light of your Word that all people may believe.

People: Come, Lord Jesus!

Pastor: We rejoice that your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and that, beholding
the incarnation of your glory, we all have received grace upon grace.

People: Come, Lord Jesus!

Pastor: We remember that by becoming flesh of our flesh, Christ sanctified all of life from birth to death, and to
redeem us he took upon himself the whole range of our human existence.

People: Christ was born, Christ has died, Christ has risen, and Christ will come again!

The Seraphic Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of Thy glory, Hosanna, Hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

The congregation may be seated.

Words of Institution:

Pastor: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which was shed for you and for all people, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

All: With thanksgiving, we take this bread and wine, gifts of the good earth, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice dedicated to your service.

Prayer of Consecration:

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.

Breaking of the Bread:

Lifting of the Cup:

Call to the Supper:

The Sharing of the Elements:

Blessing of the Children:

The congregation may stand.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Unison):

We give you thanks, Gracious God that you come to us in this sacred feast, in the lighting of a candle, and in the fellowship of this gathered community. And now, send us forth from the Lord's table a nourished and empowered people, that we may live your love, speak your peace, and sing your hope. Amen.

GOING WITH THE WORD

COMMISSION

Pastor: Go into the world awake to the signs of God's invitations to new life.

People: We know that the reign of Christ draws nearer with each right action we choose.

Pastor: God's presence and promises of hope are real.

People: We go now into God's world, trusting in God's love and placing our hope in God.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 243....."Songs of Thankfulness and Praise"

SILENT MEDITATION

POSTLUDE

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Portions of today's worship resources were reproduced or adapted from the UCC's Book of Worship, and the 2021 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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-The altar flowers and bulletins are in memory of Paul Bartolet, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bartolet and Mr. and Mrs. Herman Blankenhorn by Marion Bartolet and family.

-Offering on Sunday, November 24, 2024: \$1,934.00

-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2024: \$3,243.09

- The December Communion Offering is designated to Samaritan's Purse. The January 2025 Communion Offering is designated to Women in Crisis.

-St. Paul's Annual Congregational Meeting will be held TODAY following Worship. The purpose of the meeting is to review and vote on the proposed budget for 2025, and to elect new Consistory members. Please plan on attending this very important meeting.

-There are still a few names left for the Christian Education Committee's collection for the Schuylkill County Children and Youth. The names (along with ages and gift information) are posted on tags on the nursery window in the back of the sanctuary. Please pick a child tag and write your name with the corresponding number on the sign-up sheet. Please wrap the gifts and place them in a garbage bag with the child's tag attached. Place all gifts in the back of the sanctuary. **All gifts are due back to church by next Sunday, December 8.** If you have any questions, please speak to Amy Zimmerman.

-We are again collecting new or gently used hats, gloves and scarves to be given to those in need. All items will need to be received **by next Sunday, December 8**, and can be placed on or around the Christmas tree that is located in the back of the sanctuary. You may also call the church office to drop things at the door. Please speak to Kelly Palerino if you have any questions.

-Please join us next Sunday, December 8 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. (snow date for the party is **Sunday, December 15**)

-St. Paul's Summer Hill will be Christmas Caroling along with St. Paul's Lutheran church next Sunday, December 8 at 2pm. We will meet in the parking lot here at St. Paul's UCC. All are invited to participate. Please speak to Pastor Ken for more information.

-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, December 10**. 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.

-On Sunday, December 15, we will collect the annual special offering for Bethany Children's Home which is located in Womelsdorf. Bethany serves troubled youth between the ages 13 and 19.

-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 on **Monday, December 16** at 8:30am and **Friday, December 20** at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

-The next Consistory Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 17.

-The special UCC Christmas Fund offering will be collected on Sunday, December 22 and on Christmas Eve. It goes towards providing financial assistance to retired ministers who are struggling financially.

-We will have two Christmas Eve candlelight services this year, at 7:00 PM and 11:00 PM. Communion will be celebrated at both services. The 7:00 PM service will be live streamed.

-The 5th Sunday Offering on December 29 is designated to the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry. Envelopes will be available prior to that Sunday, or you can just make a note on any offering envelope.

-There will be a Board of Christian Education Meeting on Tuesday, January 7 beginning at 7pm. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

-Motorcycle Ministry: With the colder and more unpredictable weather ahead, we will not schedule another group ride on the third Sunday of the month, but that does not mean we are done riding yet! We will keep an eye out for good riding weather and will send out an email when we get a good opportunity to ride. If you are not on our motorcycle riders email distribution list but want to know when we are going, please contact Pastor Ken and provide your email address so that you won't miss any of the fun and fellowship!

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

-Sunday School Raffle: 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) Please speak to Laura Carll (484-269-4405) for more information.

-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/>.

-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](https://tithely.com/) and bank transfers. To help accommodate the varied ways of giving, we have 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!

-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, to include phone or cell phone numbers, email or home addresses, or any family updates.

-Sound Board help is needed!! If you are good with computers, please see Craig Borger or call the church office.

-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!

-Our church services are livestreamed on Facebook! When you can't join us in person, please join us online!

-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 for anyone interested.**

PRAYER CONCERNS: All those earnestly seeking God's help in difficult times, Military personnel & National leaders, *family and friends of Tim Smith, Ida Wildermuth, Michael Wilson, Helen Michelson*, Nick Reading, Jerry Moyer, Harold "Sammy" Marburger, Parker Kristoff, Gavin Umberger, Sarah Palerino, Scott Dawson, Caleb Shoener, Penelope Prichard, Pearl Marion Bartolet, victims of hurricane Milton, victims of Hurricane Helene, Cathy Krause, Elaine Krause, Joan Berkheiser, Mabel Edwards, Dick Clauser, Al Herring, Ron Mengel

CANCER PATIENTS: Boone, Marie Bleu, Cindy Boyer, Karen DiCamillo, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Yvonne Edling, Glennis Eifert, Joanne Forbes, Thomas Galligan, Meg Goodwin, Rebecca Henderson, Sherri Jo Jennar, Deb Kemmerling, Norma Koperna, Holly Koscak, Joan Krause, Lori Krug, Carol Mallory, Tom Nagle, Rich Nickel, Judy Ohl, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson, Terri Willard

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1

Sunday, December 1 *First Sunday of Advent

-Congregational Meeting following worship

2:00 PM -Holiday Remembrance Service

Wednesday, December 4

7:00PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 8 *Gift card order delivery *Deadline for gifts, hats, gloves and scarves

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the Celebration of Baptismal Anniversaries and Blessing of the gifts

-Fellowship time/ Church Christmas Party following worship

2:00 PM -Christmas Caroling

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 1:68-79

Philippians 1:3-11

Luke 3:1-6