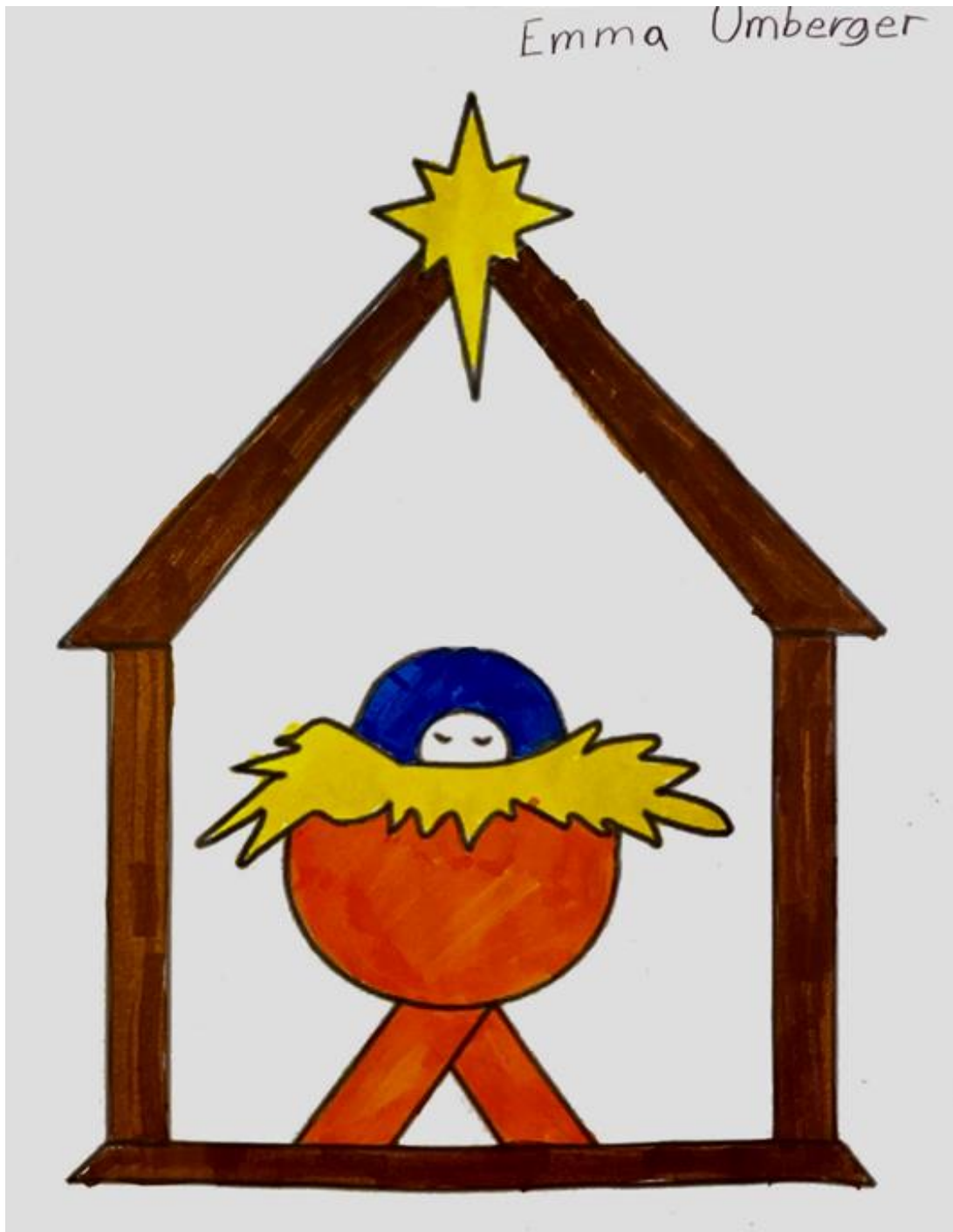


ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, December 15, 2024



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

1782
Sunday, December 15, 2024

242 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

2024
10:30am

Third Sunday of Advent
Bethany Children’s Home Special Offering

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger
Organist- Colin Andrew

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **First, Schuylkill Haven** 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.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Advent Scripture: Gospel of John 15:7-17

Lighting of the Candle

Advent Prayer

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175.....“*We Light the Advent Candles*” (Verses 1 & 4)

*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.*

*Three candles now are gleaming and show us the true way,
rejoice, the Baptist cries out, your Lord has come today,
rejoice, the Baptist cries out, your Lord has come today!*

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Rejoice, for God is here!

People: God is our strength and our light.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to God.

People: We will sing praises for all the earth to hear! Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 156.....“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Merciful God, it can be hard to follow your ways. We want to hold on to what we have. We want to mind our own business and ignore the needs of others. We want to follow the ways of the world and not your ways. Remind us that you offer us forgiveness and bring healing and redemption into our lives. Help us turn to you once again, that we may receive the good news of your endless love and grace. 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 one who loves us with a fierce tenderness takes away our guilt and leads us in the ways of life.

People: The one who guides us with justice and mercy restores our fortunes and leads us home.

Pastor: Rejoice with joy, for we are forgiven through Christ the Lord! 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, Gaige Guers

Old Testament: Isaiah 12:2-6 (Page 596)

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-7 (Page 1024)

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18 (Page 891)

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.....“Love Came to Life” by Kyle Hill

SERMON.....“Joy vs. Happiness”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 423.....“Surely It Is God Who Saves Me”

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.....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: Go with the peace of Christ in your hearts.

People: We go with the hope of the Holy Spirit in every step we take.

Pastor: Go with the joy of the Lord on your lips.

People: We go with God.

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 198.....“Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

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 Karin Ellis from the 2024 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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-The altar flowers and bulletins are in honor of Joe Nagle's Birthday (December 15), Tamara Nagle's Birthday (December 7), Tina Nagle's Birthday (January 6) and also in honor of Joe and Tamara's Wedding Anniversary (Dec. 31) by Tom and Lucinda Nagle.

-Offering on Sunday, December 8, 2024: \$2,081.00

-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.

-TODAY 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. Special envelopes are available on the bulletin table.

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

-There will be a Consistory Meeting this Tuesday, December 17.

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

-As the winter weather is approaching, and the possibility exists for service cancellations, it is important that we have your most up to date phone number and email address for our automated call out system. Please contact the church office to be sure your information is correct.

-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 include special music by the Senior Choir, church minstrels and the Sunday School children, and 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.

-Help will be needed to remove and store away Christmas decorations on Sunday, January 5, 2025 following worship. Mark your calendars!

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

-The Installation of Consistory Members and Delegates will take place on Sunday, January 12, 2025 during the 10:30am Worship Service.

-Fellowship Time: Join us for conversation, along with a cup of coffee and light refreshments following our 10:30am worship service on Sunday, January 12, 2025. 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!!

-The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet the second Tuesday of each month from 10am-12noon in the conference room. The next meeting **January 14, 2025.** 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.

-2024 Annual Report Info. Needed: Please have all information for the 2024 Annual Report to the church office by no later than Sunday, January 19, 2025. The Annual Report will be available early in February prior to the **Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, February 23, 2025.** Please email your articles to the church office at summerhillucc@gmail.com, or put them in the secretary's mailbox. Please contact Kelly at the church office if you have any questions.

-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://www.tithe.ly/) 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!

-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, *Norma Koperna, family and friends of Barry Silver*, Donald Rubinkam, Janice Arnold, Ida Wildermuth, Michael Wilson, Helen Michelson, Nick Reading, Jerry Moyer, Harold "Sammy" Marburger, Parker Kristoff, Gavin Umberger, victims of hurricane Milton, victims of Hurricane Helene

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, Joan Krause, Lori Krug, Carol Mallory, Tom Nagle, Rich Nickel, Judy Ohl, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson

FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

Sunday, December 15

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

Monday, December 16

8:30 AM -Help at the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry

5:00 PM -Boy Scout Meeting and Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 17

7:00 PM -Consistory Meeting

Wednesday, December 18

7:00PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

Friday, December 20

12:00 PM -Help at the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry

Sunday, December 22

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the Recognition of the Advent Artists and the Christmas Fund Offering

-Minstrel practice following worship

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Micah 5:2-5a

Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 80:1-7

Hebrews 10:5-10

Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)