

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday, December 22, 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

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Website: www.summerhillucc.com

Livestream: www.facebook.com/summerhillucc

1782
Sunday, December 22, 2024

242 YEARS OF FAITHFUL SERVICE

2024
10:30am

Fourth Sunday of Advent
Recognition of Advent Bulletin Artists
Christmas Fund Special Offering

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director- Rae Ann Borger
Organist- Jacob Challenger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer, from our Schuylkill Association Prayer Calendar, **retired clergy and the Christmas Fund.**

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.

RECOGNITION OF THE ADVENT ARTISTS

Evan Borger, Grant Borger, Caroline Carll, Ben Good, Josie Good, Lilly Krause, Abram Nagle, Elias Nagle, Hannah Nagle, Jeremiah Nagle, Emma Umberger

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING: FOURTH SUNDAY: LOVE

Advent Scripture: 1 John 4:9-11

Lighting of the Candle

Advent Prayer

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175..... *“We Light the Advent Candles”* (Verses 1 & 5)

*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.*

*Four candles burning brightly announce that Christ has come,
prepare, my heart, believe it, and give the Christ child room,
prepare, my heart, believe it, and give the Christ child room.*

INVOCATION

GATHERING FOR THE WORD

PRELUDE

The congregation may stand.

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Rejoice in the presence and love of Christ.

People: We rejoice in the one who lives in our hearts.

Pastor: Rejoice, for Christ brings justice and peace to our world.

People: We rejoice in the one who calls us to justice and peace.

Pastor: Rejoice with faith and hope.

People: We rejoice in the one whose promises are true. Amen.

OPENING HYMN NO. 180.....“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

Merciful Savior, you know the hunger of our hearts, the hurt of our world, and the weakness of our lives. Feed us with faith and hope. Comfort us with love and joy. Forgive us with your grace. Strengthen us with your Spirit and give us the faith of Mary. For we yearn to proclaim your promises and draw strength from your vision of justice and peace in our weary world. In hope 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: Christ’s mercy is for you, my friends.
People: Christ’s mercy is for me.
Pastor: Christ’s mercy and grace are sure and assuring.
People: May it be well with our souls. 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, Gavin Guers

Old Testament: Micah 5:2-5a (Page 805)
Gospel: Luke 1:39-56 (Page 888)

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.....“O Little Town of Bethlehem” by Dennis Allen

SERMON.....“A Mother’s Love”

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

The congregation may remain seated.

Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 183.....“Once in Royal David’s City”

The congregation may stand.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Unison)...United Church of Christ Statement of Faith— adapted by Robert V. Moss

**We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus our brother,
and to whose deeds we testify: God calls the worlds into being,
creates humankind in the divine image, and sets before us the ways of life and death.**

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

**God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness
declared through prophets and apostles.**

**In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,
God has come to us and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.**

**God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.**

**God calls us into the church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be servants in the service of the whole human family, to proclaim the gospel to all the world
and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.**

**God promises to all who trust in the gospel forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace, the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.**

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. 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: God asks us if we will be God's people.

People: Our hearts want to shout yes!

Pastor: Go into the world, feeling God's healing presence in your lives. Tell others about God's love.

People: We will not be afraid! God is truly with us!

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 185.....“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

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, Worship Elements by Joanne Carlson Brown and the 2021 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.

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-Offering on Sunday, December 15, 2024: \$2,984.00

-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.

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

-As the winter weather is upon us, 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 collected next Sunday, December 29 is designated to the Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry. Special envelopes are available or you can just make a note on any regular 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 **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, January 13, 2025** at 8:30am and **Friday, January 17, 2025** at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling or the church office if you would like to help or donate items.

-**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!

-**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 Robert Katz, family and friends Mary Alice Ross, Jacob, Tom Kunkle*, Dale Kunkle, Norma Koperna, 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 22

Sunday, December 22 *Christmas Fund Special Offering

-Minstrel practice following worship

Tuesday, December 24 *Christmas Eve

7:00 PM & 11:00 PM -Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services with the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Christmas Fund special offering

Wednesday, December 25 *Christmas Day *Church offices closed

Sunday, December 29

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the 5th Sunday Offering (Schuylkill Haven Council of Churches Food Pantry)

***Lectionary Readings for next week:**

I Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Psalm 148

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:41-52