

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Sunday, December 8, 2024**



**1235 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922**

**Pastor:** Rev. Ken McDowell, cell phone: 610-207-4783

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

**Church Email:** [summerhillucc@gmail.com](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.summerhillucc.com](http://www.summerhillucc.com)

**Livestream:** [www.facebook.com/summerhillucc](http://www.facebook.com/summerhillucc)

**Second Sunday of Advent  
Celebration of Baptismal Anniversaries**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH

This morning we remember in prayer **Faith Reformed, Landingville** 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.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

Advent Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7

Lighting of the Candle

Advent Prayer

Congregational Response: Hymn No. 175..... *“We Light the Advent Candles”* (Verses 1 & 3)

*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.*

*We light the second candle, and hear God's holy Word,  
it tells us, cling to Jesus, prepare to meet your Lord,  
it tells us, cling to Jesus, prepare to meet your Lord!*

INVOCATION

**GATHERING FOR THE WORD**

PRELUDE

*The congregation may stand.*

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: A voice cries in the wilderness:

**People: “Prepare the way of the Lord!”**

Pastor: A challenge is uttered from on high:

**People: “Make straight the paths of our God.”**

Pastor: Every valley will be lifted up.

**People: Every mountain will be made low.**

Pastor: The winding path will be made straight,

**People: and every rough way will be made smooth.**

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

OPENING HYMN NO. 152.....“Prepare the Way, O Zion”

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)

We need the tender mercy of your grace, Holy One, as we seek to comprehend the light of your love. Disperse the shadows in our lives and release those who sit in darkness, that they may find peace and hope in the places where fear holds sway. Come to us like a refiner’s fire and fullers’ soap, for we long to be purified in body and soul and made ready to see the light of your salvation. 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 brings light to our darkness and hope to disperse the shadow of death around us.

**People: God rescues us from darkness and frees us from fear.**

Pastor: The Lord is merciful and forgiving, a great and compassionate savior, for we have been forgiven and given new life in Christ. 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, Chase Guers

Responsive Reading: Luke 1:68-79 (Read Responsively)

Lector: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

**People: He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David,**

Lector: as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

**People: that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.**

Lector: Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant,

**People: the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us**

Lector: that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

**People: in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

Lector: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

**People: to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.**

Lector: By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

**People: to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

Gospel Lesson: Luke 3:1-6 (Page 890)

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.....“Blessed Savior, Son of God” by Phillip Keveren  
SERMON.....“Are You Ready for Some....”

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**  
*The congregation may remain seated.*

*Ushers will receive tithes and offerings at this time.*

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 153.....“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

CELEBRATION OF DECEMBER BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Benjamin Lawrence, son of Andrew and Elizabeth Good  
Josephine Rose, daughter of Andrew and Elizabeth Good  
Ellie, daughter of Kevin and Carolyn Richards  
Erin, daughter of Kevin and Carolyn Richards  
Emma Layne, daughter of Michael and Sarah Wolfe

*The congregation may stand.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.....Apostles Creed in the form of a Litany

Pastor: Do you believe in God?

**People: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**People: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.**

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.**

**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**People: I believe in the Holy Spirit, 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.*

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS

Introduction

Pastor: God of love and comfort, we gather together to celebrate.....We pray that these prayer shawls bring comfort to those who will receive them.

**People: Oh God, open our eyes so that we might see, open our ears so that we might hear and open our minds so that we might know who is in need of your healing power and presence. Open our hearts so that we might reach out to them.**

Affirmation of Prayer Shawl Ministry

Member: Without even knowing who would receive it, this shawl was made specifically for the person who will receive it.

**People: May they see the intricate love and care given to this shawl, mirroring the intricate love and care that God bestows upon all people.**

Member: This shawl was made to bring warmth to someone who feels a chill.

**People: May they feel the warm breath of the Holy Spirit as they wrap themselves with it.**

Member: This shawl was made to bring comfort to someone who feels alone.

**People: May they feel comfort in knowing that someone prayed for them as they pieced it together.**

Member: This shawl was made to bring peace to someone in need of prayer.

**People: May they feel the power of our prayers as they feel the yarn winding through their fingers.**

Member: This shawl was made to remind the recipient that they are part of this community.

**People: May they feel touched by our love, moved by our guidance and held up by our support.**

Prayer of Blessing

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: As we await the coming of the Promised One, may your love and knowledge and insight overflow.

**People: We will live in peace and harmony with all beings for the glory and praise of God.**

Pastor: May you be found pure and blameless, having prepared a way and a place for the Lord in your hearts.

**People: We go now into God's world with God's peace in our hearts and lives.**

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 189.....“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

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 by B. J. Beu from the 2024 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission.*

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-The altar flowers and bulletins are in memory of Arlan Krause by Ron and Debbie Koch.

-Offering on Sunday, December 1, 2024: \$3,138.00

-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.**

**-Please join us TODAY following worship for our CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY sponsored by the Sunday School.** Hot Dogs and fix'ins will be provided along with drinks and snacks. Come enjoy the fun as we welcome our special visitor, Santa! Kids will receive a goodie bag.

**-St. Paul's Summer Hill will be Christmas Caroling along with St. Paul's Lutheran church TODAY** 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 this Tuesday, December 10** from 10am-12pm in the conference room. 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.

**-Next 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 include special music by the minstrels and the children's choir and will be live streamed.

**-The 5<sup>th</sup> 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!!

**-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](mailto: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, **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, Norma Koperna, Joan Krause, Lori Krug, Carol Mallory, Tom Nagle, Rich Nickel, Judy Ohl, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson, Terri Willard

**FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8**

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

-Fellowship time/ Church Christmas Party following worship

2:00 PM -Christmas Caroling

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

**Monday, December 9**

10:30 AM -Pastor Ken conducts chapel service at Luther Ridge

**Tuesday, December 10**

10:00 AM -Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting

**Wednesday, December 11**

7:00PM -Senior Choir Rehearsal

**Sunday, December 15**

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship with the Bethany Children's Home Offering

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

**\*Lectionary Readings for next week:**

Zephaniah 3:14-20

Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:7-18