

**ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Sunday, March 30, 2025**



**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](mailto:summerhillucc@gmail.com)

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

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

**Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**One Great Hour of Sharing Offering**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Offering (Pastor’s Emergency Relief Fund)**

Rev. Ken McDowell, Pastor

Music Director and Pianist- Rae Ann Borger

**CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH**

This morning we remember in prayer **St. John’s, 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.

**LENTEN CANDLES**

Pastor: Even before the world was created, God knew that Jesus would be the Way, the Truth and the Life for all who believed in him.

**People: But God didn’t just ignore his people then, waiting until the time came for Jesus.**

Pastor: No, he gave them a way to be forgiven. He gave them a way to be healed.

**People: Many followed the outward ritual, but they didn’t live lives that reflected his glory.**

[Extinguish one candle. Do not light it again until Easter]

Pastor: What has God told us? What is good? What does the LORD require of us?

**People: To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.** (*Micah 6:8*)

RESPONSIVE HYMN NO. 354.....“Just as I am” (**verse 4**)

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind, sight riches, healing of the mind,  
yea, all I need in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

**INVOCATION**

**GATHERING FOR THE WORD**

**PRELUDE**

*The congregation may stand.*

SOLEMN DECLARATION.....Sung “Amen”

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Pastor: Come, all ye faithful . . .

**People: To worship, praise, and pray.**

Pastor: Come, all ye unfaithful . . .

**People: For God’s love welcomes us home.**

Pastor: Come into the presence of Christ . . .

**People: For Christ’s grace makes us new and whole. Amen.**

OPENING HYMN NO. 348.....“Softly and Tenderly”

**CALL TO CONFESSION**

**CONFESSION OF SIN (Unison)**

**Father God, welcome us home when we wander afar. Restore us with your compassion and love. Transform us with your miraculous grace, that we might become the new creations you envision us to be. Strengthen us with the power of your Holy Spirit, that we might offer others the same welcome, grace, and love that you have offered us. In your beloved name, 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: Everything old has passed away.

**People: In Christ, you are a new creation, full of mercy and grace.**

Pastor: The Lord forgives our sins and washes away our guilt. Brothers and sisters, “be glad in the Lord and rejoice,” for our hearts have been made right with God! 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, Mike Reber

Old Testament: Joshua 5:9-12 (Page 189)

Psalm: Psalm 32 (**Read responsively**)

Lector: Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

**People: Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

Lector: While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.

**People: For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.**

Lector: Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

**People: Therefore let all who are faithful offer prayer to you; at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.**

Lector: You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

**People: I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.**

Lector: Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.

**People: Many are the torments of the wicked, but steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord.**

Lector: Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (Page 1006)

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32 (Page 908)

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.....“Only God” by Kris Crunk  
SERMON.....“It’s Not Too Late”

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

*The congregation may remain seated.*

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

HYMN OF REFLECTION NO. 371.....“Our Father, We Have Wandered”

*The congregation may stand.*

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH.....Heidelberg Catechism: Questions 1, 31, and 34

Pastor: What is your only comfort in life and death?

**All: That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.**

Pastor: Why is he called Christ, that is, the Anointed One?

**All: Because he is ordained by God the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit to be our ultimate prophet and teacher, who fully reveals to us God’s secret council and will concerning our redemption, and also to be our sole high priest, who has redeemed us by the one sacrifice of his body and ever intercedes for us with the Father, and also to be our eternal king, who governs us by his word and spirit, and defends and sustains us in the redemption he has gained for us.**

Pastor: Why do you call Him our Lord?

**All: Because, not with gold or silver but with his precious blood, he has redeemed and purchased us body and soul from sin and the power of the devil to be his own.**

*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: Created anew in Christ,  
**People: We go to proclaim new life to the world.**  
Pastor: Transformed by God’s love and grace,  
**People: We go to bring love and grace to all.**

BENEDICTION

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

CLOSING HYMN NO. 277.....“My Savior’s Love”

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 Mary J. Scifres from the 2025 Abingdon Worship Annuals edited by Mary J. Scifres and B. J. Beu.*

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-Offering on Sunday, March 23, 2025: \$4,411.00  
-Weekly envelope & plate budget for 2025: \$3,285.91

**-The March Communion offering supports the Palisades Fires impacting California. The April Communion offering will support the Schuylkill Association General Fund.**

**-Wednesday evening Lenten services continue each Wednesday evening through April 9** at 7pm in the sanctuary. Please join us as we journey with Jesus to the cross.

**-TODAY is the final deadline for ordering Easter flowers!** (Prices: Easter Lily- \$15.00; Tulip- \$12.00; Daffodil- \$12.00) Order forms are available on the bulletin table. Orders and money may be given to Ardith Moyer or the church office. Money is due at the time you place your order.

**-TODAY we will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering.** OGHS, the refugee, relief and development offering of the UCC, transforms lives through health, education, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries. Special envelopes are available on the bulletin table.

**-The fifth Sunday Offering TODAY is designated to the Pastor’s Emergency Relief Fund.** Special envelopes are available on the bulletin table.

**-TODAY is the deadline for the plastic egg donations for anyone who signed up. The Sunday School Egg Hunt will be held Sunday, April 13** during the 9:15am Sunday School hour.

**-Pastor Ken's Lenten Study, "Message of Jesus: Words that Changed the World"** by Adam Hamilton continues each week during the 9:15am Sunday School Hour. (downstairs room B1) There is no cost and all are encouraged and welcome to attend.

**-There will be a Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting this Tuesday, April 1** at 7:00pm in room B1. Anyone interested in helping at VBS, which will be held June 17-21, is invited to attend. Please speak to Bill Reber for more information.

-A sign-up sheet is located on the table by the bulletin basket to sign up for a **Heart Association CPR, AED and First Aid Certification Class offered here at the church this Saturday, April 5** from 9am-12 noon. The class will be instructed by John Borchick and should last approximately 3 hours. The cost is \$20 per person, and the certification is good for 2 years. Please speak to the church office for more information.

**-Please remove any arrangements from the cemetery that you want to keep for future use before next Sunday, April 6.** After that date any outdated or worn arrangements will be removed.

**-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, April 7** at 8:30am and **Friday, April 11** at 12pm. Please speak to Verna Ebling, Bill Reber 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 will be held Tuesday, April 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.

**-There will be a Boy Scout Troop 651 Dining Out fundraiser at the Friedensburg Country Restaurant on Tuesday, April 8 all day.** The troop will receive 20% of your total bill. Tickets are available on the bulletin table or by contacting Lorna Palerino.

-A **Palm Sunday Service, with the Blessing of the Palms, will be held on Sunday, April 13** at 10:30am. On **Maundy Thursday, April 17,** at 6:00pm, we will gather in the fellowship hall for our version of the **Seder meal.** There is a sign-up sheet for the Seder meal on the table by the bulletin basket. A **Good Friday Tenebrae Service will be held on April 18** at 7:00pm. **Easter Sunday, April 20:** We will rejoice and celebrate Christ's resurrection beginning with our Sunrise Service at 6:30am on Easter morning. An Easter Breakfast will be held in the fellowship hall at approximately 7:15am followed immediately by a worship service with Holy Communion around the breakfast table (8:15am). Sunday School will be held at 9:15am, followed by the 10:30am Easter Worship Service with Holy Communion. There is a sign-up sheet for the breakfast located on the bulletin table.

**-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. 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.

**-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!

**-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 AND also a prayer phone call chain for anyone interested.** Please contact the church office.

**PRAYER CONCERNS:** All those earnestly seeking God's help in difficult times, Military personnel & National leaders, *family and friends of Jim Reibsane, Kenneth Smith, Roxann and Kevin Sweigert, Aiden Rodriguez, Angie Kutz, Tom Saunders, Brandon Wright, Mary Maurer, Margot Evans Carey, Alvin Spirko, Brian Moyer, Ronald Blue, Ardith Moyer*

**CANCER PATIENTS:** Marie Bleu, Cindy Boyer, Karen DiCamillo, Alex DuVee, John Eckert, Glennis Eifert, Joanne Forbes, Thomas Galligan, Meg Goodwin, Rebecca Henderson, Lisa Hoynoski, Sherri Jo Jennar, Deb Kemmerling, Joan Krause, Lori Krug, Carol Mallory, Tara Moss, Tom Nagle, Rich Nickel, Judy Ohl, Nick Reading, Pat Reading, Jim Thompson

## **FOR THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, MARCH 30**

### **Sunday, March 30 \*Easter Flower orders due \*Egg donations due**

2:00 PM -Pastor Ken conducts chapel service at Phoebe

4:00 PM -Cub Scout Meeting

### **Tuesday, April 1**

7:00 PM -Vacation Bible School Planning Meeting

### **Wednesday, April 2**

7:00 PM -Lenten Worship Service

-Senior Choir Rehearsal following worship

### **Saturday, April 5**

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM -CPR/AED and First Aid training

### **Sunday, April 6**

9:15 AM -Sunday School

10:30 AM -Worship (Fifth Sunday of Lent) with the Sacrament of Holy Communion

2:00 PM -Eagle Scout Court of Honor

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

Isaiah 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8