
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Somerset, PA

Sunday, May 24, 2026

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here!

Our Ministry Team

Rev. J. Matthew Deal: *Pastor*

Amanda Deal: *Director of Children & Youth Ministries*

Dave Neimiller: *Organist & Director of Music*

Marcy Shellenberger-Steinly: *Children's and Youth Choir Director*

Todd Wetzel: *Church Council President*

Melanie Downing: *Church Council Vice President*

Andra Snyder: *Secretary*

Jonathan Hillegas: *Treasurer*

Adam Shaffer & Diana Laue: *Trustees*

Church Office: 814-445-4534

Dear St. Paul's Friends & Family,

I've been thinking a lot about the gifts of the Holy Spirit lately. The scripture lessons for Pentecost Sunday remind me that we are not just called to be the church, but that God has given each of us certain gifts to share with the world in service of Christ. The apostle Paul lists those gifts in his letter to the church in Corinth. Here's a concise list taken from 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13:

Speaking Wisdom, Speaking Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Working of Miracles, Prophecy, Discernment, Speaking and Interpreting Languages

Now it's tempting for me to simply tell you to pick your gift and use it, but my hunch is, if you're like me, it's hard to imagine the Holy Spirit being upon you giving a gift, let alone claiming one of these gifts as your own! Such claims can feel arrogant or self-serving.

Putting aside personal inhibitions and reservations, the fact is that God has called and will always call people to do Christ's work in the world. There are plenty of stories in the Bible about ordinary men and women being called to do extraordinary things for God. These people become prophets, kings, apostles, and special messengers for God. Their lives, while instructive and inspiring, can also be intimidating as we think about how we can serve God. "Surely, I can't do what Mary or Paul did!" are often the kind thoughts that run through my mind when I think of great figures of faith in scripture.

Lest we get too discouraged, the Holy Spirit has placed ordinary people in our everyday lives who show us how God is at work in our world. Hopefully you can think of an individual or two whose wise words bring comfort and perspective to a chaotic situation. You likely can think of

some folks whose knowledge make work go smoother or bring resolution to problems. Undoubtedly you know a healer or two, someone who uses their presence to bring comfort or knowledge to resolve sickness and disease. We are surrounded by faithful people who God (and we!) can rely upon to share reminders of Christ's grace and mercy in a hurting world. We have prophets and miracle workers who find hope in hopeless situations and declare that resurrection is possible because God is present. And then there are those who have the gift of discernment. These patient souls journey with us through uncertainty, prayerfully seeking guidance and a way forward. The speakers and interpreters of tongues are all around us in this super-connected world of mass media. They have a knack for translating the good news of the gospel in many different languages and communication platforms.

I have been thinking of you, members of our church family, as I typed out the above paragraph. Faces kept popping into my head of people I know that have been gifted by the Spirit. This should come as no surprise, because if you count yourself as a follower of Christ, the Holy Spirit has given you some of these gifts. The only thing left to do is to claim your gift and use it! God needs our positive response to continue Jesus' work in the world. Are you up for it?

I know you are!

May God bless our journey together!

Blessings,
Pastor Matt

Here are our worship opportunities for this weekend:

**Sunday Worship in the Sanctuary and on Facebook and YouTube: 9:30am
The Order of Worship for Sunday, May 24, 2026—Pentecost Sunday**

Prelude

Call to Worship

Rev. Nancy Townley

Leader: O God, our hearts are on fire this day!

All: Set the blazes of hope that burn away fear!

L: Lord, we come here to be empowered to serve you.

All: Cause the winds of change to blow away doubt and alienation!

L: Praise to God who has brought to us the Holy Spirit!

All: Let us worship and rejoice, for God is challenging and empowering us this day!

*Opening Hymn

"Come, O Holy Spirit, Come"

Bulletin Insert

*Greeting

Special Music: Dana Hetz

"One Spirit, One Church"

(arr. Kevin Keil)

Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Sermon "Signs & Wonders"

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Response

Come - and fill all my life, come - and fill all - my life.

Each and ev - ry ten - der place: Ho - ly Breath, move through me.
 Pour - ing gen - tly, rush - ing strong: Ho - ly Breath, move through me.

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

*The Doxology

Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise him, all crea - tures here be - low; Praise

6
 him a - bove ye heaven - ly host; Praise fath - er, son and ho - ly ghost.

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Jacob Nault

Loving God, we remember that one of Christ's most important commandments is loving one another. With these gifts, help us show this love in our words and actions, caring for the vulnerable and offering hope in times of despair. Amen.

*Prayer of Our Savior

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.

A Litany for Memorial Day

Recognition

Memorial Day Prayer (responsive)

(by Rev. John Gundlach, former Minister for Military Chaplains in the UCC)

L: Gracious God, on this Memorial Day weekend, we remember and give thanks for those who have given their lives in the service of our country.

All: When the need was greatest, they stepped forward and did their duty to defend the freedoms that we enjoy, and to win the same for others.

L: O God, you yourself have taught us that no love is greater than that which gives itself for another. These honored dead gave the most precious gift they had, life itself, for loved ones and neighbors, for comrades and country – and for us.

All: Help us to honor their memory by caring for the family members they have left behind, by ensuring that their wounded comrades are properly cared for, by being watchful caretakers of the freedoms for which they gave their lives, and by demanding that no other young men and women follow them to a soldier's grave unless the reason is worthy and the cause is just.

L: Holy One, help us to remember that freedom is not free. There are times when its cost is, indeed, dear.

All: Never let us forget those who paid so terrible a price to ensure that freedom would be our legacy. Though their names may fade with the passing of generations, may we never forget what they have done. Help us to be worthy of their sacrifice, O God, help us to be worthy. Amen.

Closing Hymn

“The Spirit Sends us Forth to Serve”

Bulletin Insert

*Benediction

"Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness; be of good courage; hold fast to that which is good; render to no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor all people; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit." And may the blessing of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit remain with you forever. Amen.

*Organ Interlude and Extinguishing of the Candles

Postlude

Please note, we continue to accept offerings during our in-person services, USPS mailed in offerings and online with [Tithe.ly](https://www.tithe.ly). If you have any questions, please call the church at 814-445-4534.

Church Office Hours are Monday-Friday: 8:30am—3:00pm

If someone is not physically in the office when you stop by, Pastor Matt or Dave is likely somewhere else in the building.

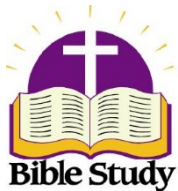
Office Phone: 814-445-4534

Greeters and Ushers:

May 24	May 31	June 7 Communion	June 14
Adam Shaffer- chair Kate Shaffer Aiden Shaffer Stephen Brick	Jonathan Hillegas- chair Dale Snyder Don Zuccolotto Rich Nichols	Ray Toy-chair Missy Toy Gary Cameron	Melanie Downing- Chair Wynne Sechler CJ Downing Henry Cook

Nursery Volunteers:

May 24	Debbi Weaver & Elizabeth Shaffer
May 31	Corey & Alice Whaley
June 7	Kruz & Paige Shumaker
June 14	Gretchen & Colten Pritts



Sunday School classes are available for all ages and run from 10:45-11:45am each Sunday.

Weekly Bible Study please join us every Tuesday at 10am in Salem Chapel.

St. Paul's Continuing Care Community is May's Mission Offering.



St. Paul's, historically related to the United Church of Christ, has been serving the needs of residents of western Pennsylvania and the surrounding states for 150 years. Our congregation has a history of supporting the work and mission of St. Paul's Continuing Care Community. Through our continued support of St. Paul's mission, we are realizing Jesus Christ's call to love God and neighbor.

**Your Opportunity to Minister to Your Neighbor:
Introducing St. Paul's Ministry Teams!**

Jesus sent his disciples into the world to baptize, preach, and teach. Since that moment almost 2,000 years ago, the church has discerned how best to join in Christ's saving work. Ministry is the act of caring for the world and our neighbors by trying to emulate Jesus' acts of mercy, love, and grace. We are launching a new way of

embodying Jesus' actions by initiating three new ministry teams at our church! Church Council members are coordinating each team, and they will be approaching church members and friends to help lead them. Over the next month, we will highlight each team's work and how you can help to do Christ's work in our church & world.

Today we meet our **Fellowship Team: Abiding Together In Christ's Body!**

Members of this team will help to plan and invite others to take part in events that bring together members of our church and community. Current events that align with the Fellowship Team's mission include: Mardi Gras, Love for the World, Share the Light, the Community Thanksgiving Dinner, and Connections Café. Melanie Downing and Diana Laue are the Church Council members who are coordinating this team's work. Please speak to them or Pastor Matt if you'd like to take part in Fellowship Team

Come on down to Connections Café!



Please join us **this Sunday, May 24th**, downstairs in the fellowship hall following worship to connect and catch up with others in our faith family and enjoy a snack & coffee. This has been a long-running, fun and meaningful ministry here, and we need your help to keep it going. **Please consider hosting a Sunday, making baked goods/providing snacks, or giving a monetary donation** (denote "Connections Café" on your envelope). Hosts are needed from the end of May through the remainder of the year. If you are willing to host an upcoming Sunday, please put your name on the scheduling display found in Fellowship Hall or speak with Andra Snyder (814-233-0642). Thank you!

2026 High School & College Graduates

Please let us know if you will be graduating this year! We would like to honor you by placing your graduation photo and bio in our display case. Graduate bio forms are on the Information Table in the narthex. Please email the information along with your photo to stpaulsuccoffice1@gmail.com or return the form to the church office.



Join us for VBS!
June 15-19, 2026
9am - noon

Calling all Challengers... it's time for "Snowball Mountain Challenge" VBS, where kids are invited to an exciting winter sports event to gear up for frosty games, snowy surprises, and hands-on lessons about resilience and faith! They will come to realize that with the strength God provides, they can share their gifts, be brave, give their all, pray, and hope.

- Classes are available for kids age 3 through completed Grade 6.
- Free lunch will be provided for all kids each day after VBS.
- Youth and adult volunteers are also welcome and needed!
- There is no fee to attend or volunteer!

Talk to Amanda for more information or if you have any questions.



Scan here to
register a child!

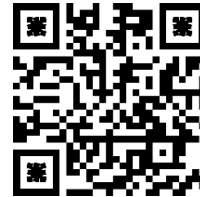
VBS Donations Needed!

We will need the following materials for VBS crafts this year:

- Cardboard toilet paper tubes
- Snow/winter-themed wrapping paper
- Cans with lids (like Pringles, baby formula, peanuts, breadcrumbs, powdered drink mixes, small oatmeal boxes, etc.)
- Heavy, clear, plastic drink bottles

If you are able to donate any of these items, please bring them to the church and put them in the donation box in the C.E. room **no later than June 7th**.

You can also help by purchasing some supplies from our online wishlist. The items can be shipped directly to the church. Visit <https://wishlist.com/ls/ld11NJ> or scan the code here. Thank you for your help!



Living Waters Church Camp

Living Waters is an inter-denominational Christian camp affiliated with the United Church of Christ located in Schellsburg, PA. For over 55 years, Living Waters has provided a safe, welcoming environment for people of all ages to grow in faith and create lifelong friendships. Their programs offer an opportunity for campers to build a strong Christian community together while exploring nature, their relationship with God, and one another. The camping theme for this year is “Trustin’ Jesus” and the following camps are being offered:

- Fishing Camp: Grades 5-12 (June 28 - July 2)
- Primary Camp: K-3rd Grade (July 5-11)
- Elementary Camp: 4th – 6th Grade (July 5-11)
- Jr./Sr. High Camp: 7th – 12th Grade (July 12-18)
- Grandparent & Grandchild Camp (July 12-15)

*Financial scholarships are available to help offset the cost of camp registration.

Visit livingwaterscamp.org for more information or to register.

An update from Stephanie Bhullar with Children of the Promise in Haiti:

“Hello! I would like to apologize that this is so very late. [We have been going through some transitions personally, and] I am still playing catch up with a lot. I apologize that this long overdue thank you was overlooked. **On behalf of all of us at Children of the Promise, and especially the boys in the Grace House, thank you to St. Paul’s UCC congregation for the Christmas cheer! The gifts were very well received. The boys especially love riding around on their scooters.**”

Ways to pray for the Grace House:

- They recently welcomed a new child into the home—a six-year-old girl named Midou. Please pray for her adjustment.
- Please pray for all the kids in their adoption journeys. Two of the Grace House kids are matched to families and are in the adoption process now. The other two are hopeful to have a family soon.
- Please pray for their house mom, Daniella, as well as the nannies, nurses, therapists, and teachers who care for these kids every day while they’re at the orphanage waiting to go home.
- Lastly, please pray for the entire team with Agape Flights who flies in our mail, including everything you all sent down. In February, their plane went down in Haiti during a flight to deliver packages from the US, and both pilots lost their lives.”
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(left) Robenson riding his new scooter. (center) Bonnet thanking God for sending him a piano. (right) Edvenson loves his new car.

