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# THIS WEEK'S NEWS

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St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Somerset, PA

Sunday, May 3, 2026

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

## Our Ministry Team

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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 Family,

*"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me." (John 14:1)*

I would have a nice little pile of cash if I had a dollar for every time that I have preached from the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel! Excerpts from this chapter are super comforting for those of us who have ever been touched by grief and loss. Over the years, family members and I have sat together planning a loved one's memorial service and 90 percent of the time, it's John 14 they select as one of the readings.

There are many reasons for this. To start off, the setting of this text, right before Jesus' own suffering and death seems to offer immediate comfort. Jesus is one of us. He's well acquainted with grief and shortly, he will be well acquainted with death. Jesus understands what we're up against.

This text also brings healing to our grieving lives as Jesus assures us that there is a place for us in God's house. He goes to prepare such a place for us, and by extension, for all his children, including our dearly departed loved ones. In other words, life beyond death is eternal life at home with God.

A final reassurance that Jesus offers us in John 14 is the promise that we will never be left alone. Loved ones and friends may leave us and even Jesus will leave his disciples as he ascends to the heavens, but the Holy Spirit (the Advocate) will be sent to always be with us. We will not be spiritual orphans no matter the loss.

All these assurances are well and good, but my fear is that we too often frame John 14 as a scripture that is about getting to heaven instead of living fully into the Kingdom of God. Jesus' words of reassurance to his disciples weren't meant to only give them hope for a heavenly reward, but rather a promise to help them live in this world as they lived out their calling to usher in the realm of God. In other words, the home that he is preparing for them, and for us, is an abiding with God for *all* eternity, in this world *and* the next.

The thing that makes John 14 so powerful is that far from being Jesus' last will and testament before he dies, it is Jesus' blessing over the disciples as they continue his earthly work. John 14 will propel the church forward, guided by the Holy Spirit, to prepare a place for God and mortals to dwell together in the world. The disciples, once Jesus leaves them, will become Christ's hands, feet, eyes, and ears—his resurrected body—living in the world. They will not only preach the gospel that God is alive and not dead, but they will embody that living message as they care for the poor, the sick, the outcast, and the broken hearted.

We stand on the shoulders of the disciples as the church today as we continue to abide with God and to help others abide with our Savior and Creator. May we bring John 14 to life in our words and actions. May our neighbors discover the abiding God through our loving actions, peace bearing, and hospitality that builds community.

May our lives of faith help to untrouble hearts near and far, in this world and the next.

Blessings on your journey,

*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 3, 2026—The Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Prelude

Call to Worship

*Rev. J. M. Deal*

Leader: We come to worship the One whom Christ has made known to us.

**All: We gather as disciples called by Christ.**

Leader: We come to worship the One who protects and guides us.

**All: We gather as Christ's beloved.**

Leader: We come to worship the One who died for us.

**All: We gather as ones delivered from death and sin.**

Leader: We come to worship the One who never leaves us.

**All: We gather as beloved children of God. Called, saved, and made whole to continue Christ's work of love here on Earth as it is in Heaven.**

\*Opening Hymn

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

56

\*Greeting

Call to Confession

(Adapted from portions of Psalm 118)

L: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good!

**All: God's steadfast love endures forever!**

L: We shall not die, because God's hand saves!

**All: Let us make our confession to God.**

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Jimmy Hoke

**God of compassionate mercy, your grace and love extend to all people. We are called to forgive others, as you forgive us. Far too often, however, we wield forgiveness like a weapon. We see others doing wrong and feel haughty when we grant them grace. We call out the sins of the powerful but fail to notice our own power. We become narrow in our quest for truth, and ignore other people, in other rooms, crying out for your justice. Help us search ourselves and seek forgiveness from those we have made beg us for mercy. Connect us to others and guide us to share power and grace as we follow you.**

Kyrie

Leader: Congregation: Leader:  
Lord have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy. Christ have mer - cy.  
Congregation: Leader: Congregation:  
Christ have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy on us. Lord have mer - cy on us.

Words of Assurance

Rev. Jimmy Hoke

L: Jesus promised his followers there are many rooms in a world filled with God's love and justice. When we speak truth to our own power, we make room for God's just world. This is the good news: God raised Jesus and made room for us, calling us to live out of God's forgiveness by making sure there is room for all.

**All: Alleluia, Amen!**

Passing of the Peace

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

A Time for Children

\*Hymn of Praise

"Seek Ye First"

354

Today' Scripture Lesson

**John 14:1-14**

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

Sermon

“Troubled Hearts”

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. J. M. Deal

**All: May our humble gifts given during this Easter Season be a taste of resurrection to those in need. May our lives be points of Christ’s light to those who are living in darkness. And may our very existence be dedicated to you, O God, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.**

The Liturgy of Holy Communion

\*The Invitation

Pastor: Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on that same day sat at the table with two disciples, and was made known to

them in the breaking of the bread.

***All: This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, youth and children, come from the east and the west, from the north and the south and gather at Christ's table.***

P: This table is for all who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

#### The Communion Prayer

P: God be with you.

***All: And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts.

***All: We lift them to God!***

P: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

***All: It is right to give God thanks and praise!***

P: We give thanks, God of majesty and mercy, for calling forth the creation and raising us from dust by the breath of your being. We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none. We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant, even when we are faithless. We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory. We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in Glory! We bless you, gracious God, for the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy.

#### The Sanctus

***All: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our Lord! Hosanna in the highest!***

P: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of the Passover.

Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this in remembrance of me."

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

***All: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.***

P: Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We spread your table with these gifts of the earth of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service on behalf of all people. We ask you to send your Holy Spirit on this bread and wine, on our gifts, and on us. Strengthen your universal church that it may be the champion of peace and justice in all the world. Restore the earth with your grace that is able to make all things new.

**All: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives forever. Amen.**

The Prayer of Our Savior (unison):

**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.**

The Breaking of Bread and Pouring Wine

P: The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

The Call to Supper

P: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

**(\*\*Please alert an usher if you need us to bring Communion to you or a gluten free wafer.)**

The Sharing of the Elements

P: Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, broken for you.

**All: Amen!**

P: Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you.

**All: Amen!**

\*The Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

**Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gift of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Unite us with all who are fed by Christ's body and blood that we may faithfully proclaim the good news of your love that your universal church may be a rainbow of hope in an uncertain world; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. Amen**

Closing Hymn

"Let All Things Now Living"

717

\*Benediction

\*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. 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.*

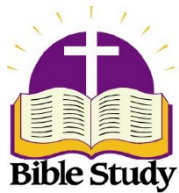
Office Phone: 814-445-4534

## Greeters and Ushers:

May 3 Communion	May 10	May 17	May 24
<b>Jonathan Hillegas -chair</b> Renee Hillegas Tina Beistel Gary Cameron	<b>Andra Snyder-chair</b> Kurt Weaver Debi Weaver Gary Cameron	<b>Melanie Downing-chair</b> Wynne Sechler CJ Downing Lisa Yeckley	<b>Adam Shaffer-chair</b> Kate Shaffer Aiden Shaffer Stephen Brick

## Nursery Volunteers:

May 3	Suzy & Eve Housley
May 10	Diana Laue & Kirsten Thomas
May 17	Debi Weaver & Taylor Fetterman
May 24	Becky & Kendall Smith



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

**Bible Study**

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

**Quarterly Giving Statements** are now available. Please pick yours up from the table in the back of the sanctuary. The remaining statements will be mailed out next week.

## 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.

**"These Days" devotionals** The April-June devotionals have arrived! They are available at both entrances to the Sanctuary as well as on the table in the back of the Sanctuary. Thank you for your patience!

## Congratulations to St. Paul's Quilters!

We join in celebrating our quilting group's wonderful showing at the Maple Festival Quilt Show. They represented us well, bringing home 1 blue ribbon, 3 red ribbons, and 3 white ribbons! In addition to our St. Paul's Quilters Group, **our own Taylor and Tristyn Fetterman** received white and red ribbons respectively for their quilts! Congratulations to all!



**Blood Drive Sponsored by The Rotary Club and Interact Club of Somerset  
Somerset Area High School Field House (511 S. Franklin Ave, Somerset)**

**Monday, May 4, 11:00am – 5:00pm**



Please call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter "Go Eagles" to schedule an appointment. Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions. Donate blood and get a \$20 eGift Card!

**Please talk to Barb Davies if you would like to volunteer to help!**

**Help needed to upgrade and refresh St. Paul's Nursery facility!**

We could use monetary donations and new or gently used donations of puzzles and toys, including the Little People Series like Noah's Ark. Also, chunky puzzles for younger toddlers would be appreciated. We do not need the following items at this time: baby bouncers, blocks, or infant swings. We would appreciate receiving any donations (monetary or toys) by the end of April. Please designate your offering envelope "Nursery Refresh" and leave any donated toys in the Library Extension across from Dave Neimiller's office. Thank you so much!



**Come on down to Connections Café!**

Please join us **this Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 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!



**Meals on Wheels Desserts – We need volunteers!**

**St. Paul's dessert week is May 18 - May 22.**



Monday, May 18 - 9X13/bundt cakes  
Tuesday, May 19 - cookies  
Wednesday, May 20 - quick breads  
Thursday, May 21 - angel food cakes  
Friday, May 22 – muffins/cupcakes

The desserts are basic - no icing, nuts, or chocolate. There is a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of the Sanctuary. This is a community service that we have provided for many years. The baked items need to be delivered to Calvary United Methodist Church, 235 W. Church St., between 6:30 am and 8:30 am on the designated day. The rear entrance may be used for delivery. Call or text Pam Webreck with any questions (814-442-6646).

## **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.

Our First Team Spotlight is ***Missions: Serving our neighbors near and far!*** Members of this team will help to plan and invite others to carry out projects that meet the needs of individuals, charity organizations, and mission partners. Mission team members will strive to embody and put into practice the spiritual beliefs and theological convictions of our congregation. Please speak with Andra Snyder or Pastor Matt if you are interested in helping with or learning more about the Missions Team.

### **Keystone Conference Annual Meeting: St. Paul's Needs Voting Delegates!**



**Keystone**  
CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The historic first meeting of the Keystone Conference of the UCC will take place June 5-7, 2026 at Millersville University, Lancaster, PA. St. Paul's is entitled to have 4 delegates represent us. Please talk to Pastor Matt if you'd like to be a delegate, attending either on Zoom or in person. Here's a look at what

should be an uplifting and educational weekend.

The theme is "Joy at the Table Together" and will feature Acts 2:46-47 as the centering scripture: "Every day they met together, breaking bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God." The meeting will include a Service of Consecration for the Keystone Conference.

Speakers will include Rev. Dr. Marcia McFee, author of *Think Like a Filmmaker: Sensory-Rich Worship for Unforgettable Messages*; Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ; Rev. Dr. Mary Luti, author of *Do This: Communion for Just and Courageous Living*; Rev. Greg Edwards, Executive Director of POWER Interfaith; Secretary Russell Redding, PA Secretary of Agriculture; and Rev. Freeman Palmer, Conference Minister for the Central Atlantic Conference.

# 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!
- Scan the QR code below or pick up a paper form from the church office to register.  
(There is no fee to attend or volunteer.)

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



## 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-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade (July 5-11)
- Elementary Camp: 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade (July 5-11)
- Jr./Sr. High Camp: 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade (July 12-18)
- Grandparent & Grandchild Camp (July 12-15)

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