
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Somerset, PA

Sunday, July 19, 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 Friends and Family,

"Listen! A sower went out to sow." (Matthew 13:3b)

We are approaching the point in summer where I start to get mildly optimistic about the possibility of my garden actually bearing fruit. Growing things has always been an awe-inspiring process for me. It's a real leap of faith each spring as we prepare the soil, plant the tiny seeds, and cover them with hopes that such a barren looking scene will coax forth life. Life would be enough of a victory for me, but to imagine green beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, and the like come forth from our little piece of earth seems too far-fetched for consideration! The reality is that our garden has never let me down. We always get a little of something each year.

Jesus shares with us the famous parable of the sower and the seeds. It's one of his most famous stories that gets us thinking about the kingdom of God. We meet a generous and perhaps

sloppy gardener who sows seeds everywhere. Seeds fall among rocks, thorns, on a heavily trodden path, and on good soil. Of course, those that fell on the good ground bear fruit, while the others perish.

Jesus compared the Word of God with the seeds. He's not clear regarding what role we play in this parable. We are the ground, but we could also be the sower, or a plant, or perhaps even, those travelers tramping on the seeds or plucking up the plants before they are fully grown. Whichever role we may find ourselves playing (and truth be told, we may end up playing multiple roles throughout our lives), we exist in God's garden.

Regardless of what you believe, who you are, or what you have done with your life, we are all God's children. We are planted and grow in the soil of this world, and we receive nourishment and care from one another. Jesus' parable does not assign for us a passive role in God's world, but rather an active part of growing and caring for others. The fruits that Jesus imagines us bearing are acts of nurturing that helps others to grow and bear fruit. We are called to water God's beloved with love and sometimes pluck out the weeds of fear and harm that sometimes threaten our neighbors. Our toil on Christ's behalf in the world helps others to experience abundant life and grace. Therefore, we are not only the soil, or seed, or nourishment, but called as co-creators in God's kingdom.

May the Holy Spirit grant you wisdom for this sacred work that we share as Christ's Body.

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, July 19, 2026—The 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

*Call To Worship

Rev. Heather A. Moody

Leader: Christ is in our midst! How will you bid him welcome?

All: We will throw open the doors to our hearts. We will delight in his presence.

L: When God shows up, surprising things can happen.

All: We will make ourselves ready. We will lay down our burdens and set aside our distractions.

L: Here we receive good news: Nothing is too wonderful for God!

All: So let us laugh and sing, rest and listen, dance and praise—Let us worship God!

*Opening Hymn

"The Church's One Foundation"

272

*Greeting

Call to Confession

Rev. J.M. Deal

L: God loves us and accepts us. Let us in confidence make our confession to God.

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Righteous God, test us and stretch us, strengthen us in your truth and justice, fortify us with resolve and power so that we might be the people you have called us to be. Holy One, even beyond forgiveness, we seek transformation. Renew our minds, open our hearts, and release our hands to repair, reconcile, and restore in your name. Keep us from being the cause of suffering. Equip us to be agents of healing. Make us attentive to your presence. Attune us to your will. Lead us on the path you have paved before us so that the grace we receive will sow seeds of redemption and healing in the world. Amen.

a time for personal reflection and confession

Kyrie

Leader: Lord have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy. Christ have mer - cy.

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

The musical score is written on two staves. The first staff is for the Leader and the second is for the Congregation. The music is in 4/4 time and G-clef. The lyrics are: 'Lord have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy. Christ have mer - cy.' for the Leader and 'Christ have mer - cy. Lord have mer - cy on us. Lord have mer - cy on us.' for the Congregation.

Words of Assurance

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

L: Children of the Divine, live in your power and purpose as beneficiaries of the new covenant and co-workers in God's liberating work and impact in the world. Receive God's forgiveness and move beyond shame and judgment to new life and right relationships with the Holy One and neighbor.

Passing of the Peace

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Special Music

A Time for Children

*Hymn of Praise

"In The Bulb There is a Flower"

638

Today's Scripture Lesson

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field, but while everybody was asleep an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he replied, 'No, for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

Sermon

"God of the Harvest"

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Response

Two staves of music in 8/8 time. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Come - and fill all my life, come - and fill all - my life." The second staff contains the lyrics: "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." The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

*The Doxology

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow; Praise him, all crea - tures here be - low; Praise" The second staff contains the lyrics: "him a - bove ye heaven - ly host; Praise fath - er, son and ho - ly ghost." The music is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. J. M. Deal

Ever-Living God, move us by your Spirit's presence. Shake us from our complacency. Awaken us from our spiritual slumber. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to give, body, mind, and soul to your service. In Jesus' name we pray, 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.

Closing Hymn

"The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve"

see insert

*Charge & 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. 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:

July 19	July 26	August 9	August 15
Todd Wetzel* Sara Wetzel Gary Cameron Pam Kister	Adam Shaffer* Gary Cameron Kim Keim	Raymond Toy* Sue Geary Stephen Brick Jeff Rose	Melanie Downing* Wynne Sechler CJ Downing Lisa Yeckley

* Chair

Nursery Volunteers:

July 19	Debi Weaver & Taylor Fetterman
July 26	Becky & Kendall Smith
August 9	Kruz & Paige Shumaker
August 15	Gretchen Pritts & Colton Dewitt



Weekly Bible Study Please join us each Tuesday at 10am in Salem Chapel!

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Somerset County is July's Mission Offering.

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Somerset County provides a free monthly book to children from birth to their fifth birthday who are enrolled in the program. These high-quality, age-appropriate books help to foster a love of reading in children at a very early age. Studies have shown that children who have their own books at home have higher literacy rates and do better in school. A gift of \$26 will provide a year's worth of books for a child and a gift of \$130 will sponsor a child for the entire 5-year program. Our congregation was able to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Somerset County 4 years ago. Thanks to your support this important mission of our church continues to thrive. Thanks for your support!



Come on down to Connections Café!



Please join us this Sunday following worship for Connections Café, a time of food and fellowship! 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!



Free meals for kids! Our church is a distribution site for free meals for youth this summer. Anyone age 18 and under can stop by the pavilion in Shellenberger Park every Monday and Thursday from 11:45-12:45 for free grab and go meals (lunch for the day and breakfast for the next morning). The program runs through the middle of August. Spread the word! If you would like to help, please talk to Kathy Gary or Andra Snyder.



We are updating our church directory in the Instant Church Directory App and would like to include as many church members and friends as we can.

Please review your directory listing, if you have one, and make any changes so our church directory remains accurate and helpful for staying connected.

If you don't have an entry, please consider being part of our directory! Here's how you can update your information or make an entry.

- **If you are comfortable using the Instant Church Directory app:**

- Find and install “Instant Church Directory” from your App or Google Play Store.
- Open the app and enter the email address you have on file with the church.
- Check your email for the verification code, then return to the app and select “Sign In With Code”.
- To update or enter your personal information, tap the menu icon (three lines) in the top left corner, and select “Edit My Info”.
- Tap “Submit Edits” when you are done making changes.
- To add a photo, tap “Edit Photo” on your profile page and choose a photo from your phone's gallery or take a new one.

- **If you would like help using the app:**

A help station will be available in the Narthex on Sundays after worship beginning July 12, 2026, and volunteers will be available to assist you.

- **If you are unable to come to church or prefer a paper form:**

Paper information forms will be available for church members and friends who prefer to complete their updates by hand, and completed forms may be returned to the church office. Church staff will update the directory on behalf of those who submit paper forms.

We appreciate your help keeping information current and hope all members and friends will take part!

Military Honor Roll Update: We are in the process of updating the church's Military Honor Rolls that are displayed each year during the Memorial Day & Veteran's Day services and on permanent display in the library extension. The names on these honor rolls are of church members or church friends who have served in the armed forces. If you or a family member have a name to be added to the roll, please contact Andra Snyder at 814-233-0642. You can view the honor rolls by going to the library extension.