
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

Somerset, PA

Sunday, August 30, 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,

"And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.'" (Matt. 16:22)

I'm sympathetic to Peter's response (see above) to Jesus' prediction regarding his own arrest, suffering, and death at the hands of the religious leaders in Jerusalem. I try to avoid suffering when I can and I wish the same for others, especially my close friends, family, and church members. No matter how much the human desire for self-preservation kicks in, none of us can lead a life free of suffering. No one will get out of this life unscathed, and perhaps that's a good thing, otherwise, we would not have had the opportunity to live. We don't get to have life without death and all the things (good and bad) that come along the way.

From Peter's point of view, Jesus' suffering looked avoidable. The steps that Jesus could take were simple. Don't go to Jerusalem. Stay away from the religious leaders who may harm you. Keep your head down for a bit and the controversy will blow over.

Jesus is having none of Peter's thinking. "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me" he tells his trusted disciple, "You have your mind set not on divine things, but on human things." Christians over the centuries have tried to understand Jesus' harsh response to Peter. Perhaps Jesus' reaction to Peter is because Peter offers a vision of preservation and protection that is tempting, but cuts against the very nature of Jesus' ministry. Jesus' saving work is among a people who have been dispossessed by the religion of their day and further victimized by the religious and civil leaders who

ruled over them. In other words, religion had become a social sedative that kept them in line with the wishes of those in power rather than a transformative presence that immersed them in the saving work of God. Jesus wished to change that narrative by declaring God's unconditional love and presence for all the people, and not just for those who were in the good graces of the religious leaders.

Jesus expanded on the purpose of his ministry by reminding the disciples what it would mean for them to be part of his saving work. They would need to shift their vision from personal concerns and focus on the needs of others. Taking up their cross and following meant making sacrifices for others, so that their neighbors could experience God's loving presence. The big difference between Peter's and Jesus' desires was that Peter focused on self-preservation while Jesus focused on the wholeness of others. Our calling is to engage in similar work, less worrying about ourselves, but relying on God's love to care to sustain us, while we offer our lives to care for others. May we experience this holy unity as we live within God's spirit as a beloved community, working for shared wholeness and abundance for all of God's children.

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, August 30, 2026—The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

*Call To Worship

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Leader: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: The God of our ancestors is with us!

L: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: We call upon the name of our God, and our God responds.

L: Give thanks to the Holy One!

All: The steadfast and faithful love of our God lasts forever!

*Opening Hymn

"Morning Has Broken"

53

*Greeting

Call to Confession

Rev. J.M. Deal

L: God does not reject us. We are not forgotten by our Creator. The gift of God's love and mercy cannot be taken away.

All: Let us in confidence and honesty of conscious confess our sins and failures to God.

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Forgiving God, we acknowledge that repentance opens the door to forgiveness and transformation. We turn from our desire for comfort over compassion, easy solutions over challenging resolution, and avoidance over confrontation. We need your strength, fortitude, and conviction to overcome our fear of loss. Help us to make room for the gains of new life for ourselves and our neighbors through our generous and sacrificial living. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

a time for personal reflection and confession

Kyrie

Words of Assurance

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

L: God is faithful to forgive and to redeem. God will sustain us through the hard work of confronting truth about ourselves, our communities, and our world. Receive the companionship of the Holy Spirit who leads and guides us in all truth.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen!

Passing of the Peace

L: May the Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

Special Music

Elyse & Mike Cordaro

A Time for Children

*Hymn of Praise

“Will You Come and Follow Me”

see insert

Today's Scripture Lesson

Romans 12:9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil; hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal; be ardent in spirit; serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; pursue hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be arrogant, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.” Instead, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink, for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Sermon

“Overcoming Evil with Good”

Pastoral Prayer

Prayer Response

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

*The Doxology

*Prayer of Dedication

Rev. J. M. Deal

Ever-present and loving God, your Word tells us to cast our cares on you because you care for us. In faith and trust we present these gifts, and ourselves, to you. Bless and multiply them to meet the needs, both hidden and apparent, of your beloved ones. Inspire each of us to live as Christ's witnesses, today and ever more. By the power of the Holy Spirit, 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

"This Is the Day"

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*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:

August 30	September 6	September 13	September 20
Diana Laue* Henry Cook Tina Beistel Pete Hauger	Adam Shaffer* Kate Shaffer Aiden Shaffer Stephen Brick	Jonathan Hillegas* Laura Fochtman Don Zuccolotto Rich Nichols	Raymond Toy Missy Toy Gary Cameron Charles Toy

* Chair

Nursery Volunteers:

August 30	Kate & Aiden Shaffer
September 6	Sue Willison & Andra Snyder
September 13	Melanie & CJ Downing
September 20	Diana Laue & Kirsten Thomas



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



August's Mission Offering is the Next Step Center

Our mission offering will go to help provide temporary housing to needy families in Somerset County. The Next Step Center is Somerset County's only emergency homeless shelter. Their mission is to help homeless county residents take the next step to self-sufficiency.

Our Annual Church Picnic is this Sunday!

We will begin the day with worship in the Sanctuary at 9:30am, then make our way outside to Shellenberger Park for the picnic. Fried chicken and place settings will be provided. Please bring a covered dish to share! We will also enjoy live music by the Upper Ursina Collective. Volunteers will be available if you need help with your covered dish before worship. The annual picnic is an awesome opportunity to invite a friend to join in our church's fun & fellowship!



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. Please have your submissions to Andra by Sunday, September 6th.



Community Back to School Drive

Thank you to everyone who participated in our back-to-school drive by providing items or monetary donations. We were able to give 26 local kids the supplies, encouragement, and confidence to start a new school year! Thanks again for your generosity!