
THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ Somerset, PA Sunday, November 1, 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,

The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted. (Matthew 23:11-12)

The literary proverb, "the clothes make the man" has been around for quite some time. Mark Twain expanded upon it adding that, "Naked people have little to no influence on society." Erasmus, a noted 15th century priest translated it from ancient Greek sources, thus making the proverb more accessible for modern audiences. Its meaning is fairly evident. If you want to be somebody, you'd better look the part. "Dress for success" as my grandmother would say!

My initial foray into looking the part happened in seventh grade when I joined the boy's junior high basketball team. I was always one of the biggest boys in my class, so the coach was excited to see me join the team. I started the first three games before he

finally figured out that I really wasn't very good at basketball. During that time, I also learned that even if you weren't very good player, you could at least *look like* you were a serious player. The addition of Nike socks and Air Jordan shoes could make all the difference in the world. Unfortunately for me, my parents weren't as ready as I was to jump on the dress for success bandwagon, so I made do with the off-brand gym shoes from K-Mart whose bold branding stated, "Got it all for basketball!" In retrospect, I doubt that Air Jordans would have helped me be a better player!

Jesus was making a similar point in the scripture lesson for this Sunday. He was referring to devotional apparel that many devout Jewish men in his day wore when he was criticizing the Pharisees for making their phylacteries broad and fringes long. Prayer shawls with fringes were

donned during worship and prayer. Similarly, phylacteries were also worn and are small leather boxes that contained important passages of scripture which they tied to their foreheads or arms. The Pharisees were an important group within the ancient Jewish religious community. They were part of a lay renewal movement whose chief mission was to increase piety among the general population by encouraging more rigorous adherence to religious law.

The problem was that some Pharisees let their newfound influence go to their heads. They began to have a following, and before long found out that making a show out of their piety would help them gain more followers. They dressed for success with more ornate prayer shawls, clothes, and phylacteries! Jesus wasn't buying it. The religious rigors that they were demanding out of others was not being matched by sincere practice on their end. Jesus' advice was to listen to their teaching, but to not follow their example. Instead, Jesus called for a new kind of devotion, one born not out of worship acts, but out of how one lived one's life. He counseled an ethic of life based on service and humility. He said, "The greatest among you will be your servant."

Jesus' teachings about faith and devotion are especially pertinent today. We continue to live in a world where clothes make the man (or woman). There are plenty of folks trying to look the part, but not really delivering the goods when it comes to humbly serving their neighbors. Leaders and influencers of all stripes think it's enough to slide on the proverbial Air Jordans of their field with hopes of fooling enough people into following them even if they fail to serve the greater good of those they aspire to lead. The church is even guilty of such duplicity. The bitter irony of this type of failure is that not only are we failing to be genuinely ourselves, but we are also failing to model ourselves after the Servant of the Servants, Jesus Christ himself.

May the Holy Spirit guide us into renewed devotion as we seek to follow Jesus as our most authentic selves. May the Spirit also remind us that God's love is not dependent upon our achievements or aspirations, but rather, God loves us without condition. God loves us for who we are.

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, November 1, 2026—The 22nd Sunday after Pentecost—All Saint's Day

Prelude

*Call To Worship (*Inspired by Psalm 107*)

Rev. J. Matt Deal

Leader: O give thanks to the Lord! God is good!

All: Let the redeemed of the Lord bear witness: God's steadfast love endures forever.

L: We gather from the east and the west, from the north and the south.

All: We gather from small towns, the countryside, and neighborhoods in between to worship God.

L: From our wandering we find a welcome place in God.

All: Let us partake of holy hospitality that nourishes body and soul with good things and quenches our thirst with Living Water.

L: Let us worship God.

*Opening Hymn

"Sing With All the Saints in Glory"

see bulletin p.10

*Greeting

Call to Confession

Iona Abbey Worship

L: We gather in Christ's name.

All: We claim Christ's promised presence

L: My brothers and sisters, not out of dread and fear, but believing that God is faithful to forgive, let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

Prayer of Confession

Rev. J. Matt Deal

Holy God, forgive us when we confuse our will with yours. Gently correct us when out of our own insecurity we attempt to build ourselves up by wounding others. Open us to your Spirit's wisdom through acts of love and gentleness. May these gifts be the medicine that heals our world's violence and arrogance, and our brokenness. God of our ancestors, lead us into wholeness so that we may join the Body of Christ in acts of charity and grace. Help us to restore the dignity of the least of these—our neighbors who are yearning for healing, hope, peace, and abundance. Transform us into a beloved community where all might find a home in you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

a time for personal reflection and confession

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. J. Matt Deal

L: The God who blessed and encouraged our ancestors in faith extends the same care to us. Just as they were saved, we too are saved.

All: Thanks be to God for Christ's abundant love and grace! Amen!

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

"I Sing a Song of the Saints of God"

see bulletin p.11

Today's Scripture Lesson

Matthew 23:1-12

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat; therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it, but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others, but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. They do all their deeds to be seen by others, for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to have people call them rabbi. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father, the one in heaven. Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Sermon

"Who's the Greatest?"

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.

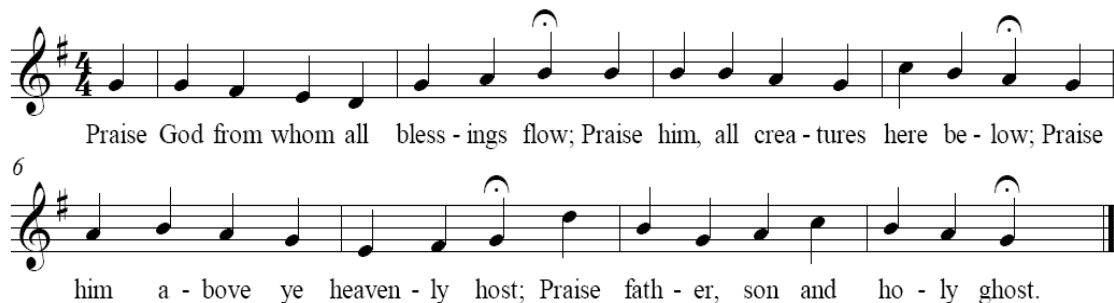
Ministry Partner Update

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

*The Doxology



*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.

Remembering the Saints

Reaffirmation of Baptism

L: Dear friends, on this All Saints' Day we gather to remember the saving work of God. Through Christ's baptism we are made one in his suffering, death, and resurrection victory.

All: For by one Spirit we were baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

L: Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

Blessing of Water

L: Eternal God, during this time of remembering the saints, we offer our prayers to you.

All: Be with us as we recall the wonder of our creation and the greater wonder of our redemption.

L: Bless this water. It makes the seeds to grow. It refreshes us and makes us clean.

All: You have made of it a servant of your loving-kindness: through water you set your people free and quenched their thirst in the desert.

L: With water the prophets announced a new covenant that you would make with all humanity.

All: By water, made holy by Christ in the Jordan, you made our sinful nature new in the bath that gives rebirth.

L: Let this water remind us of our baptism.

All: Let us share the joy of our brothers and sisters throughout the world who are baptized on this day; through Jesus Christ our risen Savior. Amen.

*Renewal of Baptismal Vows

L: Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

All: I do.

L: Do you believe in God?

All: I believe in God, the creator of heaven and earth.

L: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ, the only one begotten of God before all worlds.

L: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in God, the Holy Spirit.

L: Will you continue in the apostle's teaching and community, in the breaking of bread, and in prayer?

All: I will, with God's help.

L: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, loving your neighbor, and respecting the dignity of every human being?

All: I will, with God's help.

Blessing of the People

L: Let us pray. Eternal God, you have come to us in Jesus Christ, given us a new birth by water and Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. Bless us now with the grace we need to fulfill what we have promised.

All: Keep us faithful to our Savior Jesus Christ, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn

"For All the Saints"

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*Charge & 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:

November 1	November 8 Communion	November 15	November 22
Melanie Downing* CJ Downing Gary Cameron Pam Kister	Adam Shaffer* Gary Cameron Angie Brumbaugh Kim Keim	Jonathan Hillegas* Renee Hillegas George Hay Audrey Hay	Raymond Toy* Sue Geary Stephen Brick Jeff Rose

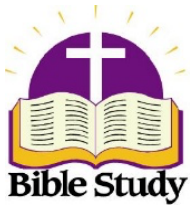
* Chair

Nursery Volunteers:

November 1	Melanie & CJ Downing
November 8	Diana Laue & Kirsten Thomas
November 15	Suzy & Eve Housley
November 22	Debi Weaver & Taylor Fetterman



Please join us this Sunday as we welcome Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, the Transitional Executive Conference Minister of the Keystone Conference! Dr. Call will be joining us to bring greetings and updates from our conference. Please plan to attend worship & Connections Café, so that we can give Dr. Call a warm St. Paul's welcome!



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

Quarterly giving statements are now available in the narthex. Please pick yours up to save the church on postage! Thanks for your continued generosity to our shared mission as a church family!

November's Mission Offering Is the Community Thanksgiving Dinner.

This month's mission offering goes to support our Community Thanksgiving Meal. Your gifts will help to underwrite this year's effort to provide approximately 300 meals to our neighbors! The annual Thanksgiving Meal is offered free of charge to anyone who desires a traditional Thanksgiving meal with members of the wider community. We could not do the meal without your generous support!

The Somerset Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be held on Thursday, November 26th at St. Paul's UCC (202 W. Union St., Somerset). This year's dinner will offer dine-in and take-out options between 11:00 am-1:00pm, or until food runs out.

Thanksgiving Dinner Volunteers Needed...On Thanksgiving Day, with shifts ranging from 6am to 2pm, and on our prep day, Tuesday, November 24th beginning at 1pm. Volunteers working with food will need to wear gloves. We invite all volunteers to pre-register for a time and job prior to the meal by calling our church office at 814-445-4534.

New Member Sunday

We are preparing to welcome new members to our church family this fall! Please put your name on the sign-up sheet in the back of the Sanctuary or talk to Pastor Matt if you're interested in joining St. Paul's. A date for New Member Sunday will be announced in the next couple of weeks.

Come on down to Connections Café! Please join us every Sunday 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).

November 8, November 15, and November 22. Supplies will be



available in the church refrigerator and freezer, and assistance making the coffee is available. 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!



Sunday School is back in session! Classes will meet following Connections Café, from ~10:45 to 11:45 each Sunday. The Adult Forum meets in Salem Chapel, and will be looking at the book, *100 Bible Verses that Made America: Defining Moments That Shaped Our Enduring Foundation of Faith* by Robert J. Morgan. Please note: The Children's classes will not meet today.

A New Confirmation Class is forming!

Youth in 8th-12th grade who would like to learn more about becoming a church member through the Rite of Confirmation are invited to join Pastor Matt on Sunday, November 8th, at 11am in the Youth Room. The Rite of Confirmation is the process through which an individual reflects upon their faith and learns about the Bible, spirituality, and the church in preparation for church membership.

Calling All Acolytes!

We need youth acolytes to light and extinguish the candles and the beginning and end of worship. Please put your name on the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway if you're interested in helping! Pastor Matt is available to instruct those who haven't done it before.



Introduction to Spanish Classes at Faith Lutheran Church

As part of preparations for a mission trip to Guatemala in February 2027, Faith Lutheran Church is offering a six-week Introduction to Spanish course open to the community. The course will be led by Flor Hernandez, an experienced instructor of both English as a Second Language and Spanish as a Second Language. The classes will provide participants with basic conversational Spanish skills while offering insight into the language and culture of Guatemala. The course is intended to support travelers and anyone interested in learning Spanish. Beginning November 10th, classes will meet each Tuesday at 6:00pm at Faith Lutheran Church, 6567 Glades Pike, Somerset. There is no fee for the course and supplies will be



provided. A free will offering will be accepted to support the Mission Team's ministry. **Sign up to reserve your spot by calling Faith Lutheran's church office at 814-443-3179.** Come prepared to learn, laugh, and enjoy discovering a new language as we seek to engage our neighbors around the world!

