THIS WEEK'S NEWS

St. Paul's United Church of Christ Somerset, PA Sunday, November 8, 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 and Family,

Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew 23:13)

I was way over prepared for my first week of Boy Scout camp. Mom's motivation was two-fold. She didn't want her 11-year-old, new to the troop son to want for anything, and even more importantly, she didn't want this rookie camper to appear inept or unprepared for his first big camping trip. After all, a scout's motto is "Be prepared." The only thing worse than forgetting something, in my mom's mind, was ignorance.

I didn't have a camping backpack, so we borrowed a huge military pack from my Uncle Bill who was in the Navy Seabees. We stuffed it full of the usual things: plenty of clothes, a change of shoes, shower shoes, rain gear, a flashlight, a back-up flashlight, copious amounts of bug spray, and a homemade first-aid kit. The items that really filled out the pack were the little extras that my mom deemed necessary for the successful completion of my merit badges: a mountain pie maker and the "M" volume of our encyclopedia set. She figured that the pie maker would come in handy for the cooking badge, while one of the thickest books of our home reference library would be needed for me to complete a report on the moon that we were both certain I'd need to do to satisfy the requirements for the rocketry merit badge. Long story short, I was way over prepared for a week at camp. My subconscious has blocked out the details of my arrival at camp, likely to protect my mental well-being, so I don't remember how I ended up carrying the pack from the parking lot to our campsite. I just know that it was a requirement that every boy carried his own pack and that my pack ended up with me in the tent.

Being prepared seems to be on Jesus' mind in this Sunday's reading from Matthew. The text famously recalls Jesus' parable of the 10 bridesmaids. Their job was to await the arrival of the groom and then escort him to bride's home, and finally to the home that would host the wedding. Inexplicably, the groom has been delayed, but the bridesmaids persisted in their vigil late into the night. As the hour grew late, we learn that 5 of the bridesmaids are ill-prepared for an all-nighter. They were running out of oil for their lamps and were deemed as foolish by Jesus, while the other 5 were proclaimed as wise for being prepared. The 5 foolish bridesmaids made a late-night run to their local oil dealer for more lamp oil, but in the process missed the groom's arrival and ended up locked out of the wedding celebration. Jesus' cautions his listeners to "Keep awake…" for the day and the hour of the Kingdom of God's arrival is unknown.

We would be mistaken if we thought that this parable was only about being prepared (having enough oil). Rather, being awake implies alertness and an acute perception of the situation in which we find ourselves. Maintaining such an awoken state means that we are not only alert but prepared to do the things that are required of us. Jesus wants us to be prepared for God's Kingdom to unfold in our midst. How can we be wise, awake, and prepared for God's realm to arrive? It's tempting to throw everything into the pack that is our spiritual and faith life. We can toil to be certain to include everything that we might need for the journey and in the process miss the necessities for serving God and our neighbor.

As we consider our readiness for God's arrival it might be helpful to remember that wisdom is not only a key attribute of God but is understood as the very essence of the Holy Spirit. In other words, we aren't only trying to be wise in our living, but to be in relationship with Wisdom, walking hand in hand as we live out our days. Wisdom in the Bible teaches us that the very essence of God is love, therefore the work and trade of the Spirit is love. Our calling in preparing for God's Kingdom is to love as best as we can. Our love of God inspires us to love others and ourselves; to work for a more compassionate, merciful, and just world for everyone. We don't know when Christ will arrive to complete God's kingdom, but we do know that our calling is to continue his work of love. Such loving work is the oil of healing for all our sins and the suffering of humanity.

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 8, 2026—The 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Prelude

*Call To Worship *(adapted from Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16)*
Leader: Call upon God's Wisdom
All: She will answer!
L: Seek God's Wisdom
All: She dwells in the midst of life.
L: Follow God's Wisdom
All: She leads in the paths of light and generosity.

*Opening Hymn "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" **622**

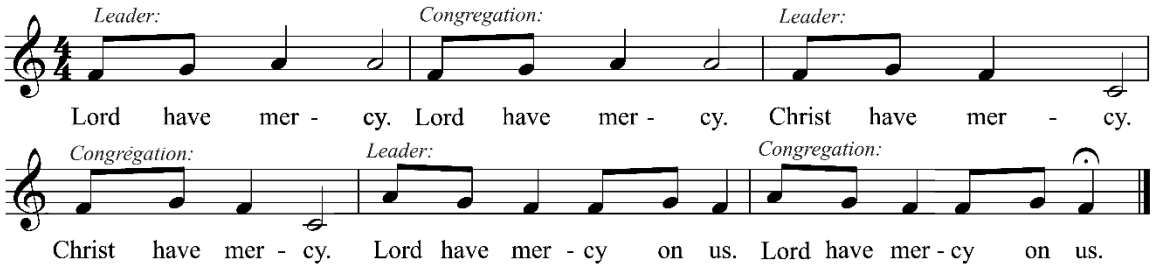
*Greeting

Call to Confession *Rev. J. Matt Deal*
L: Christ calls us to be prepared for God's coming.
All: Let us offer God our confession and inner-most thoughts as a way to prepare for Christ's breaking forth into our lives.

Prayer of Confession *Rev. J. Matt Deal*
Almighty God, Creator of the Cosmos, we confess that we have trouble staying awake to witness your glory. The fears of our world lull us into a spiritual slumber of doubt and despair. Forgive us for the ways in which we have failed to be prepared for your coming. Pardon our careless words and actions that take for granted the creation that you lovingly tilled, planted, and pruned. Help us to view the fruits of your work as gifts and not objects to be used, subdued, and discarded. May the greatest of your gifts--our sisters and brothers--live peacefully with one another in a sacred community of love, grace, and mutual care. Teach us your ways, O God, so that we may be prepared to receive and share your coming glory. In Christ we pray, amen.

a time for personal reflection and confession

Kyrie



Words of Assurance *Rev. J. Matt Deal*
L: God's grace flows through our lives, refreshing and making all things new.

All: Let this grace flow from us as justice and righteousness, that our lives and work may bless our world, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Passing of the Peace
L: May the Peace of Christ be with you.
All: And also with you.

Special Music

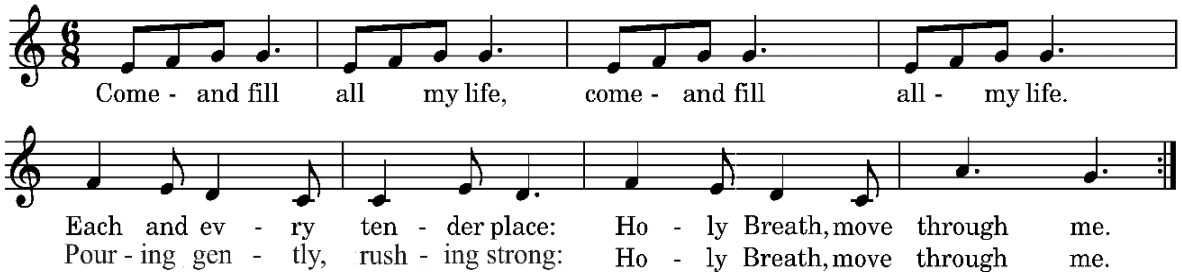
A Time for Children
*Hymn of Praise "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ" **422**

Today's Scripture Lesson **Matthew 25:1-13**
"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten young women took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those young women got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. Later the other young women came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Sermon "Essentials & Nonessentials"

Pastoral Prayer

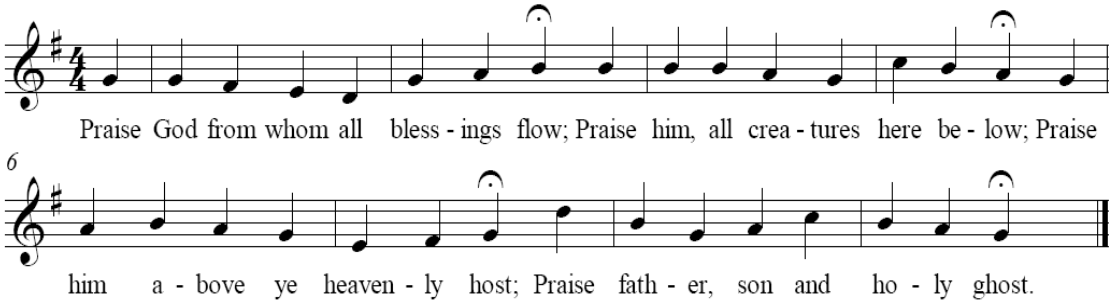
Prayer Response



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.

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 "Glastonbury Acclamations" (arr. Walker)

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 “My Hope is Built” **537**

*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:

November 8 Communion	November 15	November 22	November 29
Adam Shaffer*	Jonathan Hillegas*	Raymond Toy*	Melanie Downing
Gary Cameron	Renee Hillegas	Sue Geary	Wynne Sechler
Angie Brumbaugh	George Hay	Stephen Brick	CJ Downing
Kim Keim	Audrey Hay	Jeff Rose	Lisa Yeckley

* Chair

Nursery Volunteers:

November 8	Melanie & CJ Downing
November 15	Suzy & Eve Housley
November 22	Debi Weaver & Taylor Fetterman
November 29	Kate & Aiden Shaffer



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

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.





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 this Sunday, 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.

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.





Cleaning Crew Needed! Following the new kitchen sink fixtures, boiler installation and related construction dust, help will be appreciated to get the church kitchen and Fellowship Hall cleaned and sanitized for the Community Thanksgiving dinner. A group of volunteers is needed from 8 am to 10 am on Monday, 11/23. Meet in the church kitchen.

Chrismon Tree Volunteers are needed to help set up and decorate the Chrismon tree. If you are interested, please meet in the Sanctuary at 4 pm on Tuesday, November 24th.



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). **Hosts are still needed for the following Sundays: November 15**. 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!

Calling All Acolytes!



We need youth acolytes to light and extinguish the candles and the beginning and end of worship. Please sign-up 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!


Quilters' Bazaar
November 6 & 7
10am-4pm, St. Paul's UCC Fellowship Hall
Quilts, Baby Quilts, Needlecrafts,
and other unique gifts for sale.
Benefits the Mission Giving of the St. Paul's UCC