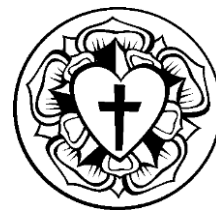




The Epistle of St. Paul's

A publication of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Summer Hill

December 2025 & January 2026 Combined



From the Pastor:

December is a time of waiting and a time of busyness.

We are waiting for the Christ Child through the Sundays of Advent, and busy with choosing gifts for our loved ones.

And while we want to concentrate on Jesus coming into the world as a baby, we are also worried about so many other things going on in the world around us. Wars and rumors of wars, fluctuating economics and what in the world will I find for Uncle Howard's Christmas present, since he seems to have everything already! There are parties to attend, some at work and some with our families as well.

But Jesus is calling us to be still and remember what the season is about...love.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God so Loved the world! I think if we can focus on love and caring for others during this season, we will pause and discover who is in need, and what is needed. We will gain perspective on what Christmas and this season are all about- God's love and our call to love one another, those we know and those we don't know. Christmas will be a time of giving to all.

Pastor Marie

Pastoral Visits

Pastoral visits and home communions are available any time. Please call the church office at 570-754-7350 or Pastor Marie at 716-353-1610.

Prayer Requests

Prayer Requests – Please email or call the church office with your prayer requests. First names only will be used in our worship services that are livestreamed. You may also give names to the person leading service prior to the start of service.

Helping Harvest

Helping Harvest donations will take place the first weekend of every month. This organization has put food trucks in areas to help the needy in place of the closed Pottsville Soup Kitchen.



The Mitten Tree will be in the narthex during the Advent and Christmas seasons to accept donations of mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, socks, etc. After the Christmas season, these items will be donated to Schuylkill Women in Crisis and Servants to All.

Congregational Meeting

Congratulations to those elected at November's Annual Congregational Meeting to serve on our Church Council. Sandy Wentz and Michael Ziegler were elected to serve a 3-year term on Church Council. In addition, Troy Hollenbach volunteered to serve on the Student Loan Committee. We thank each of them for their willingness to serve!

Our heartfelt thanks go to those who will be completing their terms on Church Council and the Student Loan Committee in December 2025.



...Christmas Caroling!!

On **Sunday, December 7**, the Social Ministry Committee will sponsor Christmas Caroling to the shut-ins and elderly. We will be joining our sister congregation, St. Paul's U.C.C. for this event. Everyone is invited to join us. We will be carpooling and leaving from St. Paul's U.C.C. at 2:00pm.

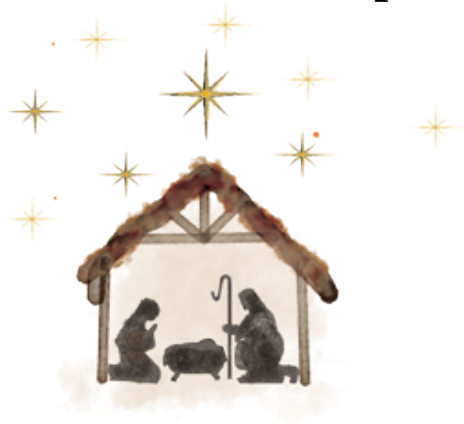
Christmas Tree Decorating

Christmas trees will be decorated on **Wednesday, December 10** beginning at 6pm. Please come and lend a hand— get in the holiday spirit too!!

Faithful Fellowship

A time of fun, fellowship and yummy treats will be held following the 10:30am worship service on **Sunday, December 14**. We would like our treats to be Christmas cookies. If anyone would like to donate a dozen cookies, it would be greatly appreciated.

Christmas Eve Worship Service



**Join us this Christmas Eve,
Wednesday, December 24**

There will be a 6:30pm musical prelude followed by the 7pm worship service. The service will feature candlelight and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry Update

The Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry is in great need and accepts all non-perishable food items and paper products. Items can be dropped off at the church and volunteers will take the donations to the pantry.

For those volunteers taking food to the Pantry—Beginning **January 1, 2026**, the Schuylkill Haven Food Pantry will be open to receive donations on the first three Mondays of each month (excluding holidays) from 8:30 to 10:30. Please note this is slightly different from the past. Certainly, if there is a need to deliver at another time, arrangements can be made to deal with that by contacting Bill Reber at 570-621-8765.

Thank you for your generous, continued support!

“Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts.”

—Janice Maeditere

Cards Welcome!

The following members are homebound.
Brighten their day and send them a card.

Betty Freeman
71 Eden View Road, Apt. 383
Elizabethtown, PA 17022

Jerald & Eileen Heffleger
619 Wynonah Drive
Auburn, PA 17922

Betty Heinbaugh
819 Summer Hill Road
Auburn, PA 17922

Earl Paxson
989 Schuylkill Mountain Rd.
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

Richard Paxson
Pinebrook- 2 Woodbridge Rd.
Orwigsburg, PA 17961

Helen Runkle
Seton Manor- 1000 Seton Drive
Orwigsburg, PA 17961

Nancy Sweitzer
P.O. Box 3- Fair Road
Summit Station, PA 17979

Harry Russell
P.O. Box 389
Saint Peters, PA 19470

Thank You!!

-to the member for their deposit of Thrivent Choice Dollars® in the amount of \$12.00

-The Social Ministry Committee would like to thank everyone who donated items to the schoolhouse, for our college students. Your generosity is appreciated, and the students are always happy to receive the packages from their church family.



December 2025 Birthdays

- 1 - Janet Pavlick
- 4 - Patti Freeman
- 5 - Allie Bright
- 6 - Rose Edwards
 - Barrett Mullins
- 7 - Jeffrey Hummel
- 13 - Linda Fessler
- 14 - Glenn Miller
- 15 - Gereon Sholl
- 16 - Vanessa Andrew
 - Courtney Schock
 - Larry Sweigert
- 18 - Lilly Chappell
 - Johnathon Felty, Jr.
- 19 - Matthew Platt
 - David Reber, Sr.
- 21 - Ava Woll
 - Nicholas Maldonado
- 23 - Ulysses Staller
- 24 - Betty Bailey
 - Jeffrey Freeman
- 25 - Rhonda Krammes
- 26 - Nancy Benedict
 - Abigail Ebling
- 27 - Cindy Freeman
- 29 - Jacqueline Paxson
 - Joanne Reinert
- 30 - Janet Costenbader
- 31 - Debbie Hummel

January 2026 Birthdays

- 1 - Tyler Donatti, Jr.
 - Cody Reber
- 2 - Trent Schantzenbach
- 3 - Karen Curtis
 - Eva Waldman
- 5 - Sydney Hill
- 7 - Leslie Fessler
- 10 - Carol Boyer
- 11 - Delaney Hill
 - Trevor Reber

13 - Leah Bowman
14 - Richard Paxson
19 - Earl Epting
- Donald Mairose
21 - Tyler Heist
- George Skripko, IV
24 - Donald Boyer
26 - Rebecca Reber
30 - Connie Harig
31 - Gary Brown
- Helen Miller

The Revised Common Lectionary Readings:

Second Sunday of Advent- December 7, 2025

Isaiah 11:1-10
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
Romans 15:4-13
Matthew 3:1-12

Third Sunday of Advent- December 14, 2025

Isaiah 35:1-10
Psalm 146:5-10
Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Fourth Sunday of Advent- December 21, 2025

Isaiah 7:10-16
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas Eve- December 24, 2025

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4, (5-12)
John 1:1-14

Christmas Day- December 25, 2025

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalm 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14, (15-20)

First Sunday after Christmas Day- Dec. 28, 2025

Isaiah 63:7-9
Psalm 148
Hebrews 2:10-18
Matthew 2:13-23

New Year's Day- January 1, 2026

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

Second Sunday after Christmas- Jan. 04, 2026

Jeremiah 31:7-14 Sirach 24:1-12
Psalm 147:12-20
Wisdom of Solomon 10:15-21
Ephesians 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9), 10-18

Epiphany of the Lord- January 06, 2026

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Baptism of the Lord- January 11, 2026

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

Second Sunday after the Epiphany- Jan. 18, 2026

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

Third Sunday after the Epiphany- Jan. 25, 2026

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany- Feb. 01, 2026

Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12



Special Dates- December 2025

- Second Sunday of Advent, December 7, 2025
- Third Sunday of Advent, December 14, 2025
- First Day of Winter, December 21, 2025
- Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025
- Christmas Eve, December 24, 2025
- Christmas Day, December 25, 2025
- New Year's Eve, December 31, 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Council Meeting- 7pm	4 Bell Choir- 6pm	5	6 Spoken Worship Service- 5pm
7 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am Social Ministry's Angel Tree deadline Christmas Caroling- 2pm	8	9	10 Christmas Tree Decorating- 6pm	11 Bell Choir- 6pm	12	13
14 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am Faithful Fellowship following worship	15	16	17 Property Meeting- 7:00pm	18 Bell Choir- 6pm	19	20
21 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am	22	23	24 Christmas Eve – Musical prelude at 6:30pm, followed by worship at 7pm Christmas Eve	25 Church Offices Closed Christmas Day	26	27
28 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am	29	31	31 New Year's Eve			



Special Dates- January 2026

- New Year's Day, *January 1, 2026*
- Epiphany, *January 6, 2026*
- Baptism of the Lord, *January 11, 2026*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, *January 19, 2026*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Church offices closed New Year's Day	2	3 Spoken Worship Service- 5pm
4 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am	5	6 Epiphany	7 Council Meeting- 7pm	8 Bell Choir- 6pm	9	10
11 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am Baptism of the Lord	12	13	14	15 Bell Choir- 6pm Newsletter article deadline	16	17
18 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20	21 Property Meeting- 7:00pm	22 Bell Choir- 6pm	23	24
25 Sunday School- 9:15am Worship- 10:30am	26	27	28	29 Bell Choir- 6pm	30	31

A BRIEF LOOK AT SOME SUMMER HILL HISTORY

By Harry Schwenk

Saturday, December 13, 1958 was one of the saddest days in all of Summer Hill Church History. On that date, the 111-year-old St. Paul's Lutheran and Reformed Church and all of its contents were destroyed by fire of unknown origin.

On Saturday morning, shortly after 8:00 a.m., Earl Knarr of Friedensburg was hunting deer in the area. He noticed smoke coming from the lower part of the church. Realizing there was a fire, Mr. Knarr hurried toward the church farm, located in the small valley, directly behind the church. He met the caretaker, Henry Fessler, on his way to the church. From the Fessler home, the men called the Summit Station, Auburn, and Schuylkill Haven Fire Companies. Within fifteen minutes, the fire companies responded. When they arrived, the interior of the church was a mass of flames. The fire had enveloped the church benches, and in a few minutes the flames reached the balcony section of the structure. Shortly thereafter, the flames shot through the roof, and the entire interior of the building was on fire. The fire companies did their best to control the blaze, but it was soon evident that nothing could save the old church.

Within an hour, the church steeple was burning. The steeple and bell toppled backwards into the building, throwing sections of the burning roof out on the Summer Hill Road and into the cemetery. All of the wood forming the church burned and only the sturdy stone walls remained. Shortly before 11:00 a.m., barricades were ordered to be placed in front of the church, a hundred feet on either side. It looked like the front wall may collapse because of the intense heat. Later in the day, the front wall did collapse. As late as Monday, despite the bitter cold on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, insurance adjusters were unable to inspect the remains to determine the cause because of the heat in the stones. The loss in the fire was eventually estimated at \$75, 000.

St. Paul's Church was located at the same sight as our present St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The fire from the church did not reach the picnic grove and social quarters there. St Paul's Church, with its beautiful wood interior and balcony, accommodated almost 450 persons. On many occasions, the church was filled to capacity for special services. At the time of the fire, the Lutheran membership was around 400, and the Reformed congregation was in the 300's.

The Rev. Clarence Steigerwalt of Schuylkill Haven and the Rev. A. Levan Zechman of Summit Station were the ministers. Both pastors received numerous phone calls and personal visits from people who were eager to give aid or assistance to the congregations. The calls came from as far as Shenandoah and Reading. Invitations were extended from the churches of Reedsville, St. Mark's (Brown's), St. John's (Friedensburg), and Zion's Red Church (Pinedale) for the Summer Hill people to worship with them or to use their accommodations for our church services. The Jefferson Grange also offered their building as a place to hold church services. The children's Christmas program, which was to be held on Sunday night at St. Paul's was cancelled. On the day of the fire, shortly before noon, the Rev. Steigerwalt announced that Sunday's services would be held at St. John's in Friedensburg at 2:00 p.m. A short time later, our congregation began holding worship services in the Wayne Township Elementary School in Friedensburg.

**THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL'S
December 2025
and January 2026**



**St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1185 Summer Hill Road,
Auburn, PA, 17922**

Church Phone: 570-754-7350

QR CODE FOR ONLINE GIVING



Address Service Requested

St. Paul's Lutheran Church email:
stpaulsummerhill@gmail.com

Website: www.SummerHillLutheran.org

Facebook:

St Paul Lutheran Church, Summer Hill

Communion service every Sunday: 10:30am

First Saturday

Holy Communion Service: 5pm

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday,
9am - 2pm (closed Friday)

Our Staff:

The Rev. Marie Meeks, Pastor: 716-353-1610
Pastor email: preachymarie@gmail.com

Matthew Hayes, Director of Music: 484-794-7902
Director of Music email:
stpaulsummerhill.music@gmail.com

Kelly Palerino, Secretary 570-617-2972

Eva Waldman, Treasurer 570-754-7350

Cindy Brown, Pavilion Sexton 570-345-1279

Stacy Fidler, Church Sexton 570-754-7350

Student Loan Committee email:
stpaulsummerhill.studentloan@gmail.com