

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

A Community of Faith for 241 Years

Sunday, December 21, 2025



1185 Summer Hill Road, Auburn, PA 17922

Pastor: Rev. Marie Meeks, Cell: 716-353-1610

Church Office Phone: 570-754-7350

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9am–2pm; Closed Friday

Church Email: stpaulsummerhill@gmail.com

Website: www.SummerHillLutheran.org

Facebook: St Paul Lutheran Church, Summer Hill

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion

*stand +kneel

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE.....“Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)”
by Chris Eaton and Amy Grant; arr. by Lloyd Larson

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P - Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C - Amen.

P - Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P - Long-expected God,

C - we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

P - God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✝
You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C - Amen.

***GATHERING SONG**.....“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (ELW 631)

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;

visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit
into ev'ry troubled breast;
let us all in thee inherit;
let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4 Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heav'n we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

***GREETING**

During this time, the presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

P - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C - And also with you.

***KYRIE (ELW p. 138)**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,

let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 139)**

Assisting minister

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All

Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,

we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.

Lord Je-sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;

you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,

in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The presiding minister leads the prayer of the day.

P – Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before the prayer.

P - Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C - Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

R - The word of the Lord.

C - Thanks be to God.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

“Christ Be Our Light” (Verses 1 - 5)

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain: Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. **Refrain**

3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (please read responsively)

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph [|] like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- [|] on the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, [|] and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and [|] come to help us.**

³ Restore [|] us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD [|] God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your [|] people pray? R**

⁵ You have fed them with the [|] bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of [|] tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision [|] of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh [|] us to scorn.**

⁷ Restore us, O [|] God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at [|] your right hand,
the one you have made so strong [|] for yourself.**

¹⁸ And so will we never turn a- [|] way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- [|] on your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD [|] God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we [|] shall be saved. R**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

R - The word of the Lord.

C - Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 142)**

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

***GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25**

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

P - The holy gospel according to Matthew.

C - Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, “God is with us.”²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P - The gospel of the Lord.

C - Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY.....“Savior of the Nations, Come” (ELW 263)**

1 Savior of the nations, come;
virgin's son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth:
God has chosen such a birth.

2 Not by human flesh and blood,
but the mystic Breath of God,
was the Word of God made flesh,
fruit of woman, blossom fresh.

3 Wondrous birth--oh, wondrous child--
from his throne, a virgin mild!
Very God, and Mary's son,
eager now his race to run!

4 From God's heart the Savior speeds,
back to God his pathway leads;
out to vanquish death's command,
back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

***APOSTLES CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

+PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

P - In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

P - In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,

C - hear our prayer.

P - Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

C - Amen.

***PEACE**

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

P - The peace of Christ be with you always.

C - And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words.

The assembly is seated.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

***PRESENTATION OF OFFERING**

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” (ELW 884)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P - Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

C - Amen.

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P - The Lord be with you.

C - And also with you.

P - Lift up your hearts.

C - We lift them to the Lord.

P - Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C - It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE (ELW p. 144)**

P - It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 144)**



***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P - Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty. When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy. At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love and to heal all the suffering world.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his life, death, and resurrection, we await his coming again in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this bread and wine we share: strengthen our faith, increase our hope, and bring to birth the

justice and joy of your Son. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever.

C - Amen.

***LORD'S PRAYER**

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

The presiding minister may address the assembly in these or similar words.

P - Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

The assembly may be seated. The bread may be broken for the communion.

***COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 146)**



COMMUNION

When giving the bread and cup, the communion ministers say

**P - The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.
and each person may respond**

C - Amen.

***TABLE BLESSING**

The presiding minister says a table blessing, and the assembly responds

**P- The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his
grace.**

C- Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P - Let us pray. God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C - Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

P - Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *sick, homebound, and imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C - Amen.

***BLESSING**

P - May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always.

C - Amen.

***SENDING SONG**.....“Joy to the World” (ELW 267)

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

***DISMISSAL**

P - Go in peace. Keep awake.

C - Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE.....“Hallelujah Chorus” from The Messiah
by G.F. Handel; arr. Clarence Kohlmann

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One vase of flowers is in honor of Matthew Platt’s Birthday presented by Glenn and Helen Miller.

One vase of flowers is in honor of Nicholas- Happy Birthday! Love, the Family

The bulletins are in honor of a “Happy 22nd Birthday Nicholas!”, Love, the Maldonado Family

Please sign the Friendship Register in your pew. Visitors, or members with a change of address, please complete the address section and telephone number. Visitors may also include the name and address of your home church so they can be notified that you have received communion.

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

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.

Christmas Eve, this Wednesday, December 24: Join us for a 6:30pm musical prelude followed by the 7pm worship service. The service will feature candlelight and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Let's have a card shower for Betty Bailey who will be 93 years old on December 24th. Please send cards to: box 277, Auburn, PA 17922.

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.

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

Reminder for hospital visits: The church is not informed by the hospital when someone is admitted. Please call the church to let us know if a pastoral visit is desired.

Attendance December 14, 2025 – 26 in person, 278 online views, 2 shares as of December 18.

The 2025 Weekly giving needed for budget is \$3,166.75.

THE WEEK OF SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

Sunday, December 21

9:15am -Sunday School

10:30am -Worship Service

Tuesday, December 23

11:00 AM -Funeral Service

Wednesday, December 24 *Christmas Eve

6:30pm -Musical Prelude

7:00 PM -Worship Service

Thursday, December 25 *Christmas Day *Church offices closed

Sunday, December 28

9:15am -Sunday School

10:30am -Worship Service

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday, December 22, 2025: Luke 1:46b-55; Isaiah 33:17-22; Revelation 22:6-7, 18-20

Tuesday, December 23, 2025: Luke 1:46b-55; 2 Samuel 7:18, 23-29; Galatians 3:6-14

Wednesday, December 24, 2025: Nativity of the Lord - Proper I

Thursday, December 25, 2025: Nativity of the Lord - Proper II

Thursday, December 25, 2025: Nativity of the Lord - Proper III

Friday, December 26, 2025: Psalm 148; Wisdom 4:7-15; Acts 7:59-8:8

Saturday, December 27, 2025: Psalm 148; Proverbs 8:22-31; 1 John 5:1-12

Sunday, December 21 – 10:30 AM

Greeter: Kathie Faust

Acolyte: Lena Ferrance

Lector: Michael Ziegler

Usher: Kathie Faust

Communion Assistant: Wendy Welsh

Counting Team: Wendy Welsh & Holly Maldonado

Rev. Marie Meeks, Pastor	716-353-1610; Email: preachymarie@gmail.com
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Cindy Brown, Pavilion Sexton	570-345-1279
Stacey Fidler, Church Sexton	570-754-7350
Eva Waldman, Treasurer	570-754-7350

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



Keep in your prayers: Richard Paxson, Irene Peiffer, Betty Freeman, Mark Fidler, Helen Runkle, Stephen Curtis, John & Betty Strauch, John Strauch, Jr., Greg Phillips, Jerry Heffleger, Harry Russell, Neida Hayes, Helen Miller, Sheila Tryon, Sallie Ann Sandler, Tonia McKague, Robert & Joyce Zeledonis, Earl & Grace Paxson, Betty Fromm Yarnell, Wayne Brensinger, Ralph Hueske, Shawnette Keller, Brittany Gallagher, Kay & Jerome Hayes, Debbie Toro, Pete and Stacy Smulligan

Those serving in the military: Brandon Felty, Karen Hall, Tyler Weller, Edward Hossler, Nick Lentz, Jake Schaeffer, Scott Aungst, Tyler Wolfe, Michael Hamilton, Mark Weinus, Jr., Jeremy Weaver, Cameron Lutz, Stephanie Boyer, Mitchell Moore, Timothy Bast, and Ryan Bast

QR CODE FOR ONLINE GIVING

