



# **St. Paul's United Church of Christ**

*A welcoming Christ-centered community...*

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

March 22, 2026  
9:30am Worship

## **We're Glad You're Here!**

**Welcome:** *St. Paul's creates experiences of joyful fellowship where children, youth, adults, and the elderly build open and honest relationships of mutual support. In welcoming the ongoing transformative power of the Holy Spirit, we find freedom from social stigmas and shame. This in turn empowers us to address isolation and marginalization in ourselves and in our wider community.*

## **Today's Scripture Readings**

John 8:2-11 + Matthew 23:23

Ministers of the Gospel – All Who Gather for God's Worship

Worship Leader– Rev. Deborah Parker-Hill

Reader – Paul Druzba

Ushers – Wanda & Paul Druzba

Accompanist – Betsy Johnson

Acolyte – Pat Babel

## **Flower Dedication**

**Join us for Sunday Morning Music & Worship  
9:30 – 10:30am Sunday In-Person / Zoom Worship**

Connect online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86359317508>

Or by phone to listen to the service:

Call 1-646-876-9923 and when prompted, enter the meeting ID: 863 5931 7508

300 West First Street, Birdsboro PA 19508  
610-582-8461 + [office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org](mailto:office@stpaulsbirdsboro.org) +  
[www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org](http://www.stpaulsbirdsboro.org)  
Church wifi: StPauls / havefaith

## Welcome and Announcements

### Prelude

*(please rise, in body or in spirit)*

### Call to Worship

Leader: Welcome to the weary and the worn.

**All: Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.**

Leader: Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

**All: Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.**

Leader: Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

**All: Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.**

Leader: Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

**All: This is God's house.**

Leader: You can make yourself at home here.

**All: Let us worship our just, merciful and faithful God together!**

**Opening Hymn: "God of Grace and God of Glory" WHM #332**

*[Worship His Majesty Hymnal] (if you prefer a familiar version that is more traditional)*

**OR**

**NCH #436, vs. 1-4**

*[New Century Hymnal] (if you prefer a version without Old English or patriarchal language)*

*Choose your preferred version. It should work to sing both versions together.*

## **Prayers of Transformation**

Leader: Jesus once said to a crowd... Join me in this act of transformation. Let us pray:

Leader: Holy God,

**All: we love to live our lives by the rules. We love clear answers. We love right and wrong. We love swift justice. We love to pick up stones, but you show us another way. You welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation. You prioritize mercy over legality. You prioritize people over procedure. You prioritize love over everything. Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters. Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you. Forgive us. Soften our hearts. Root us in mercy, justice, and love.**

**With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray...**

*(a moment of quiet reflection)*

## **Words of Grace**

Leader: Church family, we'll hear a story in a minute in which Jesus saw a crowd ready to throw stones and invited them to choose another way. Jesus offered them grace, mercy, and compassion, and the same can be said for us. So hear and believe the good news of the gospel: Our God is a God of mercy. Our God is a God of compassion. Our God is a God of grace. We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.

**All: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **Passing the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

## **We Listen For God's Word: Scripture**

**John 8:2-11 [page #77] + Matthew 23:23 [page #20]**

Reader: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

## **Prayer for Illumination**

**Sermon: *Rule Followers and Rule Breakers***

**Hymn: “Let Us Remember”**

*Words: Anna Strickland (2025) Music: George C. Stebbins (1907)*

© A Santicfied Art, [santifiedart.org](http://santifiedart.org)



Fifth Sunday in Lent | John 8:2-11, Matthew 23:23, Micah 6:8

the good news is... rooted in justice, mercy, and faithfulness

## Let Us Remember

ADELAIDE 5.4.5.4 D

Words: Anna Strickland (2025)

Music: George C. Stebbins (1907)

What is im - por - tant? What mat - ters more?  
We've been shown mer - cy all of our lives  
Fol - low - ing Je - sus, liv - ing in truth  
What does the Lord re - qui - re of us?

[2]  
Hu - man con - nec - tion or keep - ing score? In our pur - suit  
By the cre - a - tor of hu - man - kind So when we're in  
We re - main faith - ful to our roots When those roots lead  
To re - main hum - ble, lov - ing, and just Keep - ing the heart

[5]  
of jus - tice and truth Let us re - mem - ber: we fall short, too  
a po - si - tion to judge Let us re - mem - ber: they're just like us  
us out - side the lines Let us re - mem - ber: faith is a - live  
of the gos - pel in mind Let us re - mem - ber: do what is right



## **Affirmation of Faith**

*United Church of Canada, 1980  
(New Century Hymnal #887)*

Leader: We are not alone, we live in God's world.

**ALL: We believe in God:**

**who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

**We trust in God.**

**We are called to be the Church:**

**to celebrate God's presence,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.**

**In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.**

**We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

## **Gathering the Prayers of the People**

*After each petition, we will say the following –*

Leader: Holy One, in your mercy (*or another appropriate phrase*),

**All: Hear our prayer.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

**All: Our Creator, 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.**

## Offering

*(please rise, in body or in spirit)*

**Sending Hymn: “Great is Thy Faithfulness”**

**WHM #519**

*[Worship His Majesty Hymnal] (if you prefer a familiar version)*

**OR**

**NCH #423**

*[New Century Hymnal] (if you prefer not to sing Old English or patriarchal language)*

*Choose your preferred version. It should work to sing both versions together.*

## Benediction

## Postlude

*Liturgy adapted from:*

*“Tell Me Something Good: Grounding Ourselves in the Good News this Lent,” by Rev. Sarah Speed, © 2026 A Sanctified Art/Words for Worship.*

+++++

## Announcements

**Congregational Meeting** will be held on June 14<sup>th</sup> following worship.

**Easter Sunday** - We will be taking an all-church picture on Easter Sunday to share at the first Keystone Conference meeting in June. We hope you will want to be a part of it!

**Our Daily Bread** for March/April/May 2026 has arrived! Pick up your copy today!

**Save the Date for the church picnic.** It will be on July 12<sup>th</sup>! Details to follow.

**Altar Flowers for March** – We have openings for altar flower dedications for March 29<sup>th</sup>. If you'd like to honor or memorialize someone, contact Wanda Druzba at 610-385-3382, or see her at church for information and to reserve a date.

**Daniel Boone School District Food Gift Cards** – We raised \$700! Gifts cards from Boyer's were dropped off at Daniel Boone Area School. Thank you for partnering with St. Paul's UCC, Berks Ministerium, and the DBASD.

**Daily devotional cards for each day of Lent**, as we had last year, is still available. This year's theme is : "Tell Me Something Good."

**March Special Offering** –When natural or human made disasters occur in the United States or around the world, the United Church of Christ is able to respond because of your One Great Hour of Sharing offerings. Ensuring for health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives, your OGHS offerings are hard at work 365 days a year touching and changing lives. Throughout this month, let us say yes to caring by offering our generous support to One Great Hour of Sharing!

**GOOD NEWS TO SHARE!!! BIRDSBORO SHARES IS LIVE!!!!**

Birdsboro Shares is a mutual aid network that we have been working on. This is a network of neighbors helping neighbors. Whether you have a need, a resource/skill to share, or both, we all enter the network the same way., through the Birdsboro Shares form on St Paul's website. See link:

<https://stpaulsbirdsboro.org/birdsboro-shares-mutual-aid-network/>

Your help is needed to get the word out, so please share with friends and neighbors!!.

**Bible Study** is held in the upper room in the church each Sunday beginning at 8:30am. Join us for good conversation and discussion about the books of the bible.

**“Prayers of the People”** – Our current Elders will be holding meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evening of each month at 6pm via Zoom. All are welcome including phone participants. Contact Pat Babel at 484-949-5033 to be included in the email distribution. Thank you!

## **Caring Closet starting for 2025-2026 school year**

Ashley Griffith, the coordinator for the Daniel Boone School District's "Caring Closet" sent a flyer to the church asking for the following:

- \* Boys underwear for our Primary Center & Intermediate Center, S-XL & 4/5-12; & all sizes for Middle & High School
- \* Girls underwear for our Primary Center & Intermediate Center, S-XL & 4/5-12; & all sizes for Middle & High School
- \* Universal items such as applesauce squeeze pouches & individual goldfish snacks; children's toothpaste & toothbrushes; deodorant; tampons & panty liners

**Boyer's 1% Caring & Sharing** – When shopping at Boyer's don't forget to have the cashier scan your 1% Caring & Sharing card (this card has St. Paul's name printed on the back of it). Every time you use the card Boyer's will give St. Paul's a rebate check totaling 1% of the total purchases made by those who used the card. This is a simple and easy way to help St. Paul's. If you don't have a card but would like one, please contact the church office.

**Redner's Save-A-Tape** – We are still collecting Redner's tapes for which St. Paul's can receive 1% of the total bill (Excluding items controlled by the government such as tax, milk and tobacco products). Redner's accepts receipts for redemption up to three years from their printed date and there is no dollar limit. Start saving tapes today! You can drop your receipts in the weekly offering plate or mailed to the church office.

*Electronic Giving is available with the Vanco Mobile App or through our website "Give" page.*



## St Paul's Weekly Calendar

Sun, Mar 22	Worship (C) New Millennium (CE)	9:30am 7pm-8pm
Tues, Mar 24	Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL)	5:30pm-7pm
Wed, Mar 25	Disciple Bible Study (CE)	9:30am-10:30am
Thurs, Mar 26	Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL) Currently Sober (CE)	5:30pm-7pm 6:30-7:30pm
Fri, Mar 27	Beginners Meeting (CE)	7pm- 8pm
Sat, Mar 28	Nancy Moyer Counseling (CE-LL)	8:30am – 2pm
Sun, Mar 29	Palm Sunday Worship (C) New Millennium (CE)	9:30am 7pm-8pm

## Holy Week Activites

Sun, Mar 29	Palm Sunday Worship (C)	9:30am
Thu, Apr 2	Maundy Thursday (C-upper room)	6 pm
Fri, Apr 3	Good Friday Cross Walk (Boyer's Mkt)	3 pm
Sun, Apr 5	Easter Sunday celebration (C)	9:30am

### This Week: Church Office Hours

Tues – Thurs 9:00am-1:00pm

### This Week: Pastor Deb's Office Hours

Tues/remote 9:00am-1:00pm

Wed/in-office 9:00am-1:00pm

Thurs/remote 9:00am-1:00pm



## The Covenant Association of the Keystone Conference UCC News from around the Association

March 1, 2026

# Keystone

CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### DID YOU KNOW?

The United Church of Christ (UCC) is a Protestant Christian denomination with a rich theological tradition that places significant emphasis on the concept of “covenant.” Unlike many denominations that focus on hierarchical or creedal structures, the UCC understands itself as a “covenantal” church, which deeply shapes its identity, governance, and relationships among its members and congregations.

In its most basic sense, a covenant is a sacred agreement or promise, often seen throughout the Bible as foundational to the relationship between God and God’s people. In the UCC, covenant refers to intentional, mutual relationships of trust and responsibility, both with God and with one another. This idea is rooted in the biblical tradition, where covenants are made between God and individuals or communities, such as Abraham, Moses, or the people of Israel.

The UCC is organized not by a strict hierarchy or by rigid rules, but by a series of covenants. Congregations, associations, conferences, and the national setting of the church all relate to each other through covenants rather than through top-down authority. Each setting of the church is “autonomous but not independent,” meaning that while each body governs its own affairs, it does so in partnership and accountability with others.

For example, local churches covenant with their regional associations and conferences, promising to walk together in faith, support, and mutual accountability. These relationships are voluntary and based on trust, rather than enforced by legal or doctrinal requirements.

Covenant in the UCC also shapes the way members interact with each other. When individuals join a UCC congregation, they often make a covenant with that community, committing to grow in faith together, support one another, and serve the wider world. This sense of covenant extends to relationships with other churches, ecumenical partners, and the broader Christian community.

## The Covenant Association (cont)

This approach allows for diversity of belief and practice within the UCC, as the covenantal structure prioritizes relationship and mutual respect over uniformity. Churches and members are encouraged to listen deeply to one another and to discern God's will together, even when they may disagree.

To help our churches in understanding the covenantal polity of the UCC, the Manual on Local Church was created. This manual is now available as a free download from the UCC: <https://www.ucc.org/manual-on-church/>

This document clearly outlines covenants with God, members, and other UCC entities. I recommend all congregations review it as a valuable resource for your Consistory or Board.

The Manual on Local Church also has a section on "Local Church Governance". It includes information on Constitution and/or Bylaws. "Policies that equip the church for faithful ministry and attend to the practical and legal considerations for a local church."

Let us always remember that we are in covenant with one another so that the Word of God might be spread throughout the Covenant Association.

Let the Executive Committee know if you have any questions.  
You can email us at [revsmorris@gmail.com](mailto:revsmorris@gmail.com)  
Blessings, Rev. Sharon S. Morris, Moderator

### **MARCH EVENTS**

Sunday, March 22, 3 pm, Pastoral Installation of Domenik Ackermann,  
Maidencreek Church, 261 Main St., Blandon, PA 19510

Sunday, April 26, 3 pm, Covenant Association Spring Meeting, at  
St. John's (Gernants), 13 Gernants Road, Leesport, PA 19533