

St. Paul's United Church of Christ
47 S. Whiteoak Street
Kutztown, PA 19530
(610) 683-3393

Sunday School for all ages 9 AM
Sunday Worship 10:15 AM

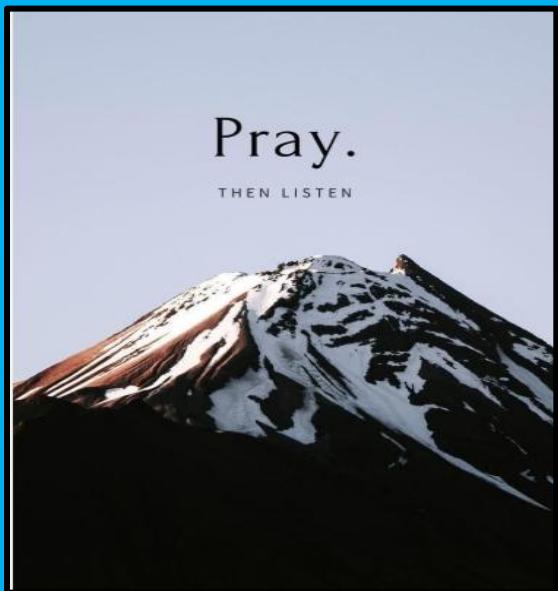
office@stpaulkutztown.org



The Pulse

JAN VOL 57 #1

Of ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Kutztown, PA



Fellowship Hour

Please join us for fellowship each Sunday after worship. Do not miss this opportunity to have coffee and a conversation.

Each week a different person/group will oversee the hour. A sign-up sheet is on the window across from the church office.

Join us!!!!!!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

January 4th - Epiphany Sunday Communion & Fellowship
January 4th - Rejoicing Spirits
January 25th - Installation of Deacons & Consistory
January 28th - Women's Guild Meeting

NOVEMBER 2025

21,938.67



\$21,523.68

From the Desk of our Interim Pastor

Have you ever had a breakthrough? A sudden “Aha!” experience of an idea suddenly crystallizing in your mind? Perhaps you had lost something valuable and had been racking your brain about where you had last seen it, and then presto, you remembered! Our minds work in strange ways. God does too.

Scripture testifies that God in the divine nature of Jesus showed himself to Gentiles, non-Jews who weren’t even looking for him and didn’t even know he existed. These are the Magi (sometimes called the “Wise Men”) who unlike Joseph and Mary, had no foreknowledge of Christ’s coming.

The Christian day of Epiphany celebrates this event of God coming to the Gentiles, non-Jews like you and I are. It is a day of great joy and completes the twelve days of the Christmas liturgical season. Epiphany is the celebration of God’s Word made flesh. It is customarily observed on January 6, twelve days after Christmas. Sunday, January 4, will be Epiphany Sunday in 2026.

Epiphany reminds us that God can appear to us suddenly in a flash of intuition, a flash of spiritual insight. It testifies that God comes to us not only at Christmas, but anytime our minds and spirits are awake, alert, and open to the Divine Being – the divinity disguised in each of us waiting to be greeted.

Epiphany is about discovering and greeting the miracle of Divinity within self and others. It often begins with stillness.

Be still.

Be still

Surprised.

Be still

Surprised

By the day today.

Be still

Surprised

By the day-to-day

Miracles.

(Kevin Anderson)

Your grateful pastor,

Rev. Jim

DO MORE THAN IS EXPECTED OF YOU

Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5 challenges us to think beyond the bare minimum. The cultural context of this verse refers to a Roman law that required individuals to carry a soldier's gear for one mile, a task that undoubtedly felt burdensome and unjust. Yet, Jesus instructs His followers to willingly go a second mile—not out of obligation, but as an act of love and grace.

This concept applies so profoundly to our own lives. Whether in relationships, work, or showing kindness to strangers, we often feel justified in doing only what is required or expected of us. But Jesus calls us to something greater—a life that reflects His radical love and selflessness. Going the extra mile is not about earning praise or recognition; it is about demonstrating the heart of God through our actions.

When we willingly go beyond what is expected, we mirror the generosity of Christ, who always gives in abundance. He did not stop at meeting basic needs—He healed, forgave, and sacrificed Himself to give us life. That kind of love inspires us to engage with the world differently, offering our time, resources, and effort as acts of worship and service.

It is not always convenient or easy to exceed expectations. Perhaps it looks like staying late to help a coworker finish a project, forgiving someone without waiting for an apology, or showing kindness in response to hostility. But every time we choose to go beyond what is required, we point others to the One who first went the ultimate extra mile for us.

Thought of the Day: Where can you extend kindness or grace in a way that goes above and beyond? Ask yourself: "How can I reflect the generosity of Christ in the moment?"

- Joe Pettigrew

A New Year at St. Paul's UCC

Where is God calling you to use your talents:

- Finance
- Property
- Missions
- Home Communion/Visitation
- Personnel
- Technology

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. James Latimer.....Interim Pastor
Barbara MerkelAdmin Assistant
Judy HeffleyOrganist
Donna SheafferBell Choir Director

Church Officers

Kathy LandisConsistory President
Steve LeinbachConsistory V.P.
Daryn Keim.....Consistory Secretary
Laraine Wuchter.....Treasurer
Marjorie WeidaFinancial Secretary

St. Paul's UCC belongs to the
Covenant Association,
Pennsylvania Southeast
Conference of the United Church of
Christ.

Association Website:
<https://covenantassociation.org>

Pennsylvania Southeast
Conference Website:
<https://psec.org>

United Church of Christ website:
<https://www.ucc.org>



Your nominations have been received ,
and selections have been made by the
nomination committee.

Next steps

- Nominees are contacted
- Names submitted to
Consistory for approval
- Chairman selected
- Begin our work

REJOICING SPIRITS of EASTERN BERKS COUNTY

“Waiting and Watching” was the theme for December’s Rejoicing Spirits worship service. Pastor Chris was the lead pastor providing the message. Everyone participated in the interactive part of the message. Rejoicer Hannah DeVall read the scripture. Music filled the sanctuary.

After worship we adjourned to Fellowship Hall for Christmas cookies and a Santa charcuterie snack followed by rousing games of Nativity Bingo, including prizes. Everyone enjoyed playing Bingo and it was wonderful to see everyone helping each other. The last game was full card bingo, and everyone won a prize! Everyone also received a gift from Rejoicing Spirits, a wooden ornament of their choice.

Our next Rejoicing Spirits worship service will be January 4, 2026, at 3:00 pm. Pastor James Schlegel will be the lead pastor. The message will be “The Gift.” Start the new year by joining us for worship!

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Webb, Co-chair of Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County

New Year's Resolutions

<https://billygraham.org/>

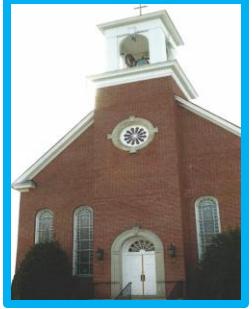
Does the Bible say anything about making resolutions? Yes, the Bible certainly encourages us to examine our lives and resolve to change them if necessary (although not just at the beginning of the year). The Psalmist, for example, made a resolution to keep his speech pure: “I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed.” (Psalm 17:3).

Why do so many of our resolutions fail? Sometimes it is simply because they are not realistic. Instead, they are only wishful thinking, with no way to make them happen. For example, you might resolve to make a million dollars this year, but if you do not have any way to earn it, it is not going to happen. Other resolutions fail because we are not willing to make sacrifices necessary to reach them.

But the real problem is within ourselves-within our own hearts and minds. We would like to be better people, but no matter how hard we try, we find ourselves tripped up by our own moral failures and weaknesses. Even the Apostle Paul experienced this: “I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.” (Romans 7:18).

What is the solution? The solution is to turn to God, confessing our sins to Him and seeking His help to live the way we should. Begin the New Year by turning to Jesus Christ and inviting Him into your life. Then ask Him to help you become the person He wants you to be. This is what Paul did, and that is why we could say, “I can do all this through Him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:13).

FIND PEACE WITH GOD TODAY!



Greetings from Consistory

The Consistory met on December 10, 2025. Many topics were discussed in addition to the regularly scheduled Secretary, Finance, Treasurer and Pastor reports.

A pressing topic at the Consistory was the cleaning of the church. The deacons and other volunteers, including members of the Property Committee, have been helping to keep the church clean.

Thank them for taking on these chores. The Personnel Committee has been searching for a reliable housekeeping service and has agreed to give an opportunity to a local organization. There is another possibility if this business does not perform to the church's satisfaction. Thanks again to those members who have stepped up to help in the meantime. If you are still helping, please sign the date and time you performed the task so that others will not duplicate. Communication is key.

The Congregational Meeting held on November 16 was briefly reviewed. Both the revised bylaws and the 2026 budget were approved at the congregational meeting. Also, according to the finance team, the Boiler Fund has \$9,623.20 to reach the goal of \$55,093. If you would like to contribute toward the goal, you may bring your donation to the office, or on a Sunday, place it in the offering plate with "Boiler Fund" clearly noted on your envelope.

On Sunday, November 23, the congregation nominated members for the Pastor Search team. There are presently three people who are continuing from their experience on the Transition Team set up by Pastor Deb, but two to four people are still needed to complete the team. A nominating group consisting of two Consistory members, Steve Leinbach and Sharon Larsen, and one additional member outside the Consistory, Joan Gangewere, reviewed the nominations and decided upon the candidates to be called due mostly to their number of votes from the congregation. They are still awaiting a reply from one of those potential candidates. In the next month, the nomination team will present a proposed slate of candidates to the Consistory for approval to serve on the Pastor Search team. In addition, the Consistory will select the Chair of the Committee as outlined in the bylaws.

In addition, during the late winter or early spring, the church will sponsor a fundraising effort in the form of a sandwich sale. Keep watching out for that.

Also, the Consistory in January will elect its President, VP and Secretary. If you are a member of consistory, you will have the opportunity to vote. You are also encouraged to check with various members of Consistory who will still be active in 2026 to ask if they might consider volunteering for an officer position. According to the bylaws, all officers must be selected from within the Consistory, those who will be continuing next year and those joining in January. If you are interested in volunteering to be an officer, or are asked to consider it, please seriously think and pray about whether to take on any of these very important roles in helping the church to operate smoothly, work closely with Pastor Jim, and move forward.

If you would like any more information beyond what is in the Pulse, please ask any of the officers of the Consistory or the office. Also, you may read the Consistory minutes posted on the bulletin board outside the office.

Catch the Spirit, Embrace the Journey! And as Pastor Jim has said, "Wake up. Show up."

Submitted by Kathy Landis



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Melinda Miller
Dennis Bubbenmoyer
Terri Hilbert
Melissa Unger
Kathryn Widdows
Gretchen Barrell
Fernando Garcia
Christopher Rarick
Jonathan Rarick
Ted Thomas
Patrick Fitzgerald
Chelsie Kistler
Debra Conover
Jeryl Kulp
Mason Moriarty
Gene Madiera
Tyler Luckenbill
Jonathan Hilbert

January 1
January 6
January 6
January 7
January 8
January 9
January 10
January 12
January 12
January 14
January 16
January 19
January 21
January 26
January 27
January 29
January 30
January 31



JOB OPENINGS AT ST. PAUL'S

CUSTODIAL POSITION

St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Kutztown, PA has an immediate opening for a part-time custodial position. The job responsibilities include cleaning the following areas: church sanctuary, bathrooms, kitchen, hallways, office, and Sunday School rooms. Cleaning involves dusting, vacuuming, mopping, washing, etc. as appropriate. Expected number of hours is approximately 8-12 per week. Compensation is \$16-\$18 per hour, depending on qualifications and experience. Statements of interest should be sent to Barbara Merkel, Church Admin. (email: office@stpaulskutztown.org phone: 610-683-3393). A complete job description will be sent to all interested applicants.

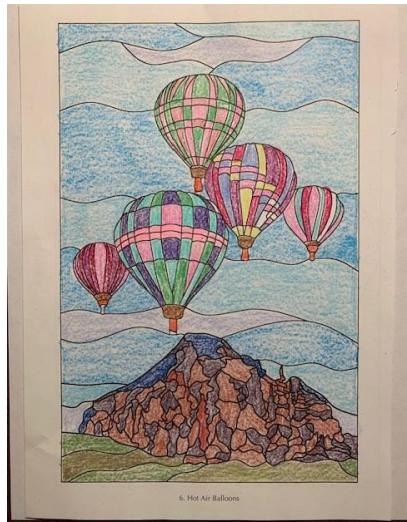
CHOIR DIRECTOR/PIANIST

Direct the choir Sunday mornings and during evening choir practices once a week from September to June. Coordinate music with the Worship Committee. Accompany choir on the piano, schedule piano tuning. Encourage/recruit singers to join the choir. Six to eight hours weekly. Annual compensation - \$7,000 - \$10,000 commensurate with skills and experience. See Pastor Jim.



YOUNG AT HEART

On November 19 Young at Heart had a **colorful** day with thirteen attendees beautifying illustrations and inspirational Psalms and Proverbs decorative cards. Eight members of St. Paul's participated along with five members of the outside community. It was a fun activity because everyone there could carry on a lively conversation with others while they were coloring with markers, colored pencils, and crayons. Many of the drawings colored were "stained glass" pictures that can be hung in a window to brighten a room with a stunning brilliance. Everyone chose whatever material and media they wanted to use, and some participants created many more than one picture. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed viewing the stained-glass papers at the window to experience how they would appear to the residents at Willow Brook. Thirty of the artistic renderings, some of which were of Christmas, were delivered to the Willow Brook Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center. Residents there will be able to choose whichever piece they would like to display on their window or attach to their door as decoration or reminder of scripture.



Here is the schedule of planned events occurring in 2026:

- **January 21-Rev. Harry Serio, PA Dutch, and Celtic Spirituality**
- **February 18-Annette Fisher, Greeting Card history and making a card**
- **March 18- Dannenhower Honey Farm (proposed)**
- **April 15- Jane Choc, Art, and Stuffed Animals**

As always, thanks to the Young at Heart planning team: Marcia Keiser, Sharon Kozlowski, and Sandi Madeira as well as Barbara Merkel, who takes care of advertising, creating posters, and other helpful tasks. YAH would not be possible without these dedicated people. Also, thank you to those members who are generous in donating refreshments. And thanks to Pastor Jim as he usually pops in to greet everyone.

Young at Heart 2026 SCHEDULE: Every third Wednesday of the month, 10 AM – 12 noon. **Come, bring a friend, and enjoy the program and fellowship.** Sign up on the attendance sheet posted outside the office.

If you have any ideas for presenters, please let one of our YAH team members know about it.

Submitted by Kathy Landis

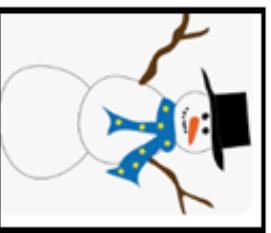


JANUARY 2026

Worship—10:15 AM

Sunday School—9:00 AM Adult SS 8:45 AM

Office hours; Tuesday—Thursday 8 AM—12:00 PM



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!	2	3 9:30 AM Yoga
4 Pastor Sunday Epiphany Communion Fellowship after Worship 3 PM Rejoicing Spirits	5 6 PM Yoga	6 10 AM Worship Mtg. 7 PM Bible Study	7	8 Kutztown Folk Music practice (S) 6:15 PM Bells 6-8:30 PM Lions Club (FH)	9 7:30 PM Kutztown Folk Music— Kutztown Pipe Band	10 9 AM Prayer Walk 9:30 AM Yoga
11	12 6 PM Yoga	13	14 7 PM Consistory	15 PUSE DEADLINE	16	17 9:30 AM Yoga
18	19 6 PM Yoga 6:45 PM Fellowship 7 PM Missions	20 6-8 PM Relay for Life 7 PM Bible Study	21 10 AM—Noon Young at Heart 2-9 PM H & H Quilters	22 6:15 PM Bells	23	24 9:30 AM Yoga
25 Installation of Consistory & Deacons	26 6 PM Yoga 7 PM Property Mtg.	27	28 6 PM Women's Guild (FH)	29 6:15 PM Bells	30	31 9:30 AM Yoga
			30 6 PM Personnel (L)			