

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@stpaulskutztown.org



The Pulse

MARCH VOL 57 #3

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

Did You Know?

The first ever cordless phone
was created by God.
He named it Prayer.
It never loses its signal
and you never have to recharge
it. Use it anywhere!
Amen.

(Kelly's Treehouse)

LEADERS NEEDED

Prayer Links - Receive and communicate
prayer requests with the Prayer Group.
Maintain and update a Prayer Journal with
the help of the office.

Spiritual Council - Conduct meetings as they
are needed.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 1 - Rejoicing Spirits	3:00 PM
March 12 - Lenten Study	10:30 AM
March 26 - Lenten Study	10:30 AM
March 29 - Palm Sunday	

JANUARY 2026

\$5,597.00



\$18,060.05

I often get asked, "What is Lent?" Lent is a Church liturgical season. Others include Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost. Each season has its unique spiritual and religious purpose.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18th, this year, and continues for about forty days leading up to Easter Sunday, April 5. The theme of Lent is to prepare our spirits and hearts for the miracle of resurrection we celebrate at Easter.

The forty-day period of Lent recalls the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness chaos after his baptism. During those forty days, scripture tells us he was severely tempted by Satan, tempted to put his faith in material things like earthly authority, money, fine food and the like. Jesus resisted those temptations by employing spiritual practices that connected him to God's strength, wisdom, stamina and courage.

What is a spiritual practice? A spiritual practice is an activity that brings you to a greater awareness of God, an activity that connects you more strongly to God. Typically, it shifts your awareness from everyday concerns about material things and responsibilities, things that don't last very long, to that which does last and is most real – God. Simply put: spiritual practices open us to God's grace.

Spiritual practices vary depending upon one's personality, physical condition and interests. Here are some examples: Walking, scripture reading, meditating, drawing, music, sewing, and writing. You may wonder why I didn't mention praying. I didn't because all of these activities can be a form of prayer when done to intentionally connect with God – when intentionally turning one's awareness to the Holy One.

Through spiritual practices we receive the "living water" Jesus offered the Samaritan woman. *Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this (well) water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."* (John 4:14, *The Message*)

Lent invites spiritual practices that draw us closer to our Lord and open us to God's grace.

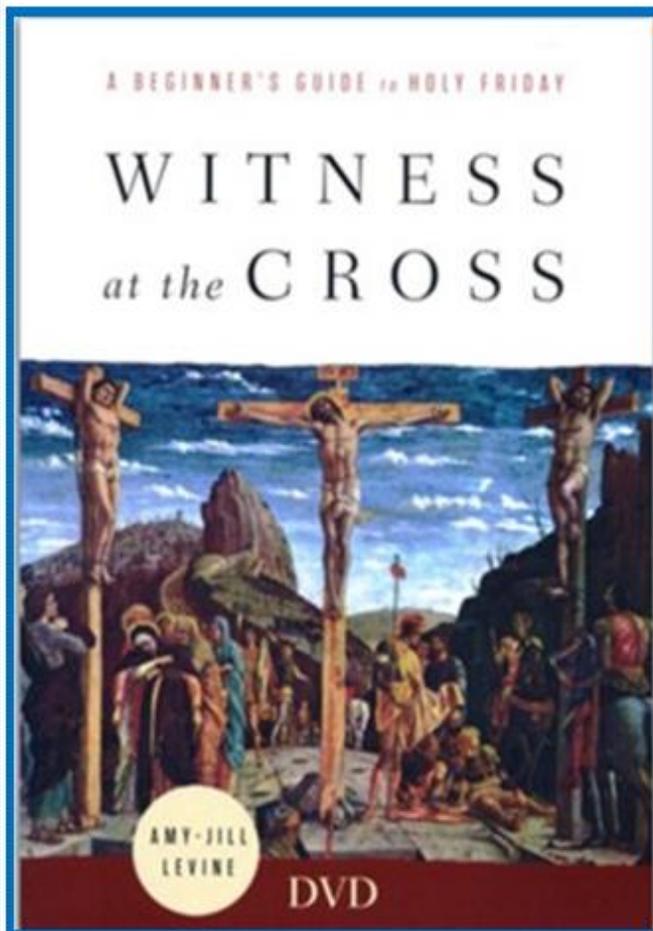
How thirsty are you?

Rev. Jim



LENTEN STUDY

10:30 AM—NOON
with Lunch
FEBRUARY 26TH,
MARCH 12TH, MARCH 26TH



Join us here at St. Paul's
in Fellowship Hall



Daryn Keim – Pastoral Search
Committee Chairperson
Mandy Boyer – Secretary
Keith Wuchter – Chaplain
Sue Kunkel
Barbara Krause
Ray Oswald

I wanted to take a moment and update everyone on the Pastor Search Committee. As you may have heard the committee is now in place. During the interim work of Pastor Deb three people were appointed. They include Mandy Boyer, Sue Kunkel and Keith Wuchter. Under the leadership of Reverend Jim and the nominating committee, consistory voted and approved the three final members: Daryn Keim, Barbara Krause and Ray Oswald. Of those six members, according to our by-laws, the nominating committee would then put forth a potential name for chairperson. That person was then contacted and asked if they would consider chairing the committee. Finally, consistory would then vote on the nominated chairperson. During January's consistory meeting a vote was held and I became the Pastor Search Committee's Chairman. I am honored and humbled by your faith in me to lead this group. It is a job that I do not take lightly, and I will do my absolute best, along with the other members and guidance of Rev. Jim, to lead St. Paul's forward on our Pastor Search.

Our committee has already held its first meeting on February 1st. We are scheduled to meet again on February 22nd after worship, and again on March 29th with Rev. Dr. Kevin McLemore, our Search and Call Minister of the Keystone Conference. As you can see, we are off and running! At our first meeting the committee elected Mandy as Secretary and Keith as our Chaplain, who will lead the group with opening and closing prayers. The purpose of this committee is to gather information which will help us form a Long Profile to be placed on the UCC's website to attract potential candidates to apply to be our next settled Pastor. The Long Profile is structured to ask three primary questions; Who are we? Who is our neighbor? And who is God calling us to become? Let me be clear, this is not a fast process. It is not a process that should be rushed. As the old saying goes, all good things take time. Our goal is to have the congregation elect, in a unified way, a new pastor whose gifts will help us grow as a church family.

Overall, this is a spiritual time for our church. A time to listen to God and what He has planned for us. I know with prayer, communication, and openness we can navigate this church to a bright and healthy future.

And the people said, **AMEN!**

-Daryn Keim
Pastor Search Committee Chairman

Feeling Guilty About Something?

Guilt has a way of weighing us down. It keeps replaying past mistakes in our minds, convincing us that we are unworthy of forgiveness or love. It whispers the lie that we must carry the burden of our wrongs forever. But the beauty of God's grace is that we do not have to carry it alone, or at all.

God's forgiveness is not conditional or partial. It is a full, complete pardon, freely given to anyone who comes to Him with a repentant heart. It is a promise He declares repeatedly in His word. Psalm 103:12 assures us, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." Once God forgives, He no longer holds our sins against us. He gives us the freedom to walk in His grace, leaving the weight of guilt behind.

Still, it can be hard to forgive ourselves, even when we know God has forgiven us. This is where trust comes in, trusting that God's grace is greater than our sin, trusting that His love is bigger than our mistakes, and trusting that His forgiveness is final. Living in that truth allows us to be free, to move forward, and to walk in the purpose He has for us.

If guilt is weighing you down today, know this: God is not asking you to pay Him back for your mistakes. He is inviting you to surrender them at the foot of the cross, where His mercy was poured out for you. Through Jesus' sacrifice, you are forgiven, cleansed, and made new.

Tak a moment to quiet your heart. Confess your struggles to God and ask Him to help you release your guilt. Then step forward in the confidence of His forgiveness. You do not have to live chained to your past. His grace has set you free.

Thought of the Day: Identify one area of guilt you have been holding onto. Whether it is letting go of self-judgement, making amends, or sharing God's grace with someone else.

- Dr. Joe Pettigrew

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. James Latimer.....Interim Pastor
Barbara MerkelAdmin Assistant
Judy Heffley Organist
Donna SheafferBell Choir Director
Cathy Dill.....Bell Choir Director
Sue Kunkel.....Custodian

Church Officers

Kathy Landis Consistory President
Sherry Leinbach..... Consistory V.P.
Gerald Silberman.....Consistory Secretary
Laraine Wuchter.....Treasurer
Marjorie Weida Financial Secretary

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

Association Website:

<https://covenantassociation.org>

Keystone Conference Website:

<https://keystoneucc.org>

United Church of Christ website:

<https://www.ucc.org>



FOUR LEAF CLOVER

In ancient Celtic traditions, druids considered the four-leaf clover a powerful protective charm against evil spirits and would bring blessings to those who carried them. Legend says the four leaves represented faith, hope, love, and luck, making it an all-encompassing symbol of positivity.

<https://www.google.com>



The theme for the February 1st worship service was "Love is...". Susan Lishman was the worship leader. Susan is the grandmother of one of our Rejoicers. She briefly shared how important Rejoicing Spirits is to her family. The monthly Rejoicing Spirits worship service is the only time her family can worship together. All 7 members of her family were there, including Sparky!

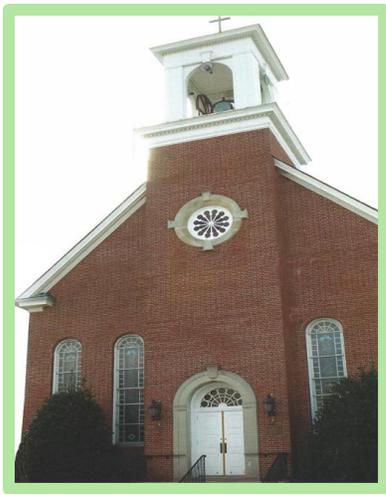
Sue's message was presented by a reporter (played by Sue dressed in her press hat and her husband's sport coat) who was there to interview worshipers about what Love is. Love is kind, Love is patient, Love is helping others, Love is.....What is Love to you?

Sue prepared a craft with hearts and Love is... statements for Rejoicers to create a card to keep or share with someone special. Fun, fellowship and food were enjoyed by all.

Pastor Chris Angstadt will be the lead pastor for March.

Please note: There will be no Rejoicing Spirits April 5th. The first Sunday in April is Easter Sunday.

Submitted by Erin Webb,
Co-chair of Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County



Greetings from Consistory

The past month was a challenging one with all the serious, snowy weather and cancellations. We cancelled in-person church twice and replaced another one with a Zoom service. The decision to close is always a difficult one made cooperatively with the Pastor, Consistory President, VP, and the chair of the Sunday School. The church lost three weeks of offerings, so please consider donating the offerings you missed. As you know, the bills keep coming no matter what.

Consistory met at the regularly scheduled date and time on February 11. Here is a summary of the main topics and decisions from last month.

Elections were held at the January meeting for officers of the Consistory. Results were: Kathy Landis, President; Sherry Leinbach, Vice President; Jerry Silberman, Secretary. New deacons began their 3-year terms: Brian Beck, Ethel DeMatteo-Beck, Sue Kunkel, and Mandy Boyer.

Thanks for the dedicated service of Steve Leinbach, Erin Webb, Christine Keim, Jan Lenich, and Daryn Keim whose terms were completed. They will be missed.

A major topic was the suggested changes to the current Property Use Contract, now entitled the Facility Use Agreement. Both Erin and Barbara worked together to develop new standards for church members, church-oriented and nonprofit organizations which make use of the church facilities. A new fee schedule was suggested in order to defray the cost of utilities. Also included in the changes will be a required certificate of insurance for all groups using the church facilities on an ongoing basis. The Consistory was asked to consider the changes and relate opinions to the office before a vote to be taken next month.

On the Pastor's Report, he asked the Consistory to answer this question, "What have we learned so far?" The group offered positive remarks about the experience with Rev. Jim:

- Interaction among the pastor and among church members has been encouraged and supported. His meet and greet sessions serve as a good example.
- His worship and sermon style holds your attention.
- His presence and delivery are very conducive to attracting new church members.
- He is not telling us what to do; rather he is giving direction – leading us.

On February 10 Carl Mantz, Lorraine Wuchter, Marqe Weida, Kathy Landis and Jerry Silberman (via phone) met with our Merrill Lynch representative Tom Newell to review the investments in St. Paul's trust funds. The total amount of funds is similar to that of last year. However, more is needed to keep up with inflation. Also, at the Consistory meeting, the Treasurer's Report indicated that our income is not keeping up with expenses. Therefore, we continue to draw funds from our investments to pay our bills. Please consider prayerfully to contribute more offerings to the church and bring others to church.

As for the Boiler Fund, Jerry reported that the goal will be reached when some donations already received are deposited this month. The new Trust Fund that includes the Boiler contributions is earning interest as the other trust funds do.

The Lenten Study led by Pastor Jim will be held in three sessions on Thursdays from 10:30 to noon on the following dates: February 26, March 12, and March 26. Lunch will be included thanks to Pal Eckert. The video called “Witness at the Cross” will depict the various participants at the time of the crucifixion- bystanders, soldiers, the two thieves, etc. to understand their role. Also, the presenter helps us look within ourselves as to how we might relate. **Please sign up so Pal will know how much food to prepare.**

Delegates are needed for the Keystone Conference on June 5-7, 2026, at Millersville University.

Also, for the local Covenant Association, the meeting will be held on April 26 from 3:00 to 5:30 PM. Two delegates are required according to St Paul’s bylaws. Please let Kathy or the office know if you would like more information or offer to attend to represent St. Paul’s.

New leaders are needed for the Spiritual Council and Prayer Links. Tom Lenich has agreed to lead the next meeting of Spiritual Council, but another elder is needed to follow him. Due to June Rung’s health, she is not able to lead Prayer Links. Since Pastor Jim is three-quarter time only, it does not allow for him to lead these groups. Others need to step up for these valuable groups to continue. Please let Barb or Kathy know if you would like to help out.

The Consistory is writing important procedures to make them clearer to members regarding use of the kitchen equipment, procedures in the case of fire, use of the facilities, and many others. These are often required for safety purposes, the protection of our members and others using the facilities, as well as for training. Already, an inventory of the church assets has been completed for insurance purposes. Also, a detailed account of how to use the gas stove and ovens in the kitchen has been prepared. **No one is allowed to use the gas equipment unless fully trained** by Jan Lenich or other experienced personnel approved by the Consistory.

The American Heart Association First Aid, CPR and AED class will be starting in March (now indicated as March 14) with 10 participants. See more on the notice in the Pulse. All participants have been notified.

The meeting ended with this:

Blessing

May love and strength be in my hands.
May love and courage be in my heart.
May love and wisdom be in my mind.
May love be with me and work through me
today, and in all my days.
(Beginner’s Grace, Kate Braestrup)

- Submitted by Kathy Landis



YOUNG AT HEART



On Wednesday, January 21, everyone enjoyed the presentation by Reverend Dr. Harry Serio on the topic of Pennsylvania Dutch and Celtic Spirituality. Anyone who knows Dr. Serio recognizes his wide knowledge of numerous subjects, and this was apparent with the subject at hand.

As Reverend Serio mentioned, there is a lot of crossovers in beliefs between the Celts and the PA Dutch. There is spirituality relating to church and folk spirituality. The Celts believed that the Spirit of God exists in people and in all things (nature, rocks, trees, etc.) They had a tradition of gathering around an oak tree to elicit the spirits and wisdom from the tree. Also, the Celts believed in natural healing and celebrated the seasons. Much of these practices carried over to the PA Dutch. Many were farmers and recognized Groundhog Day, celebrated the Harvest, Ascension Day, and All Saints Day.

A local example of healing with herbs was Mountain Mary from Oley who was a servant to Conrad Weiser. She was well known for healing with native spices and herbs. Some PA Dutch practices came from the Old World such as the use of Hex signs to ward off the evil from animals and the use of anti-witch protections like placing salt on the windowsills or door frame. Needless to say, this was a most fascinating conversation with some of the attendees relating their knowledge about cultural practices, even pow wow doctors. How fun and interesting!

Dr. Serio left us with a question, "How are we preserving this culture?" Sadly, the PA Dutch Folk Festival in Kutztown was cancelled. It is up to people who would like to see this culture stay alive to promote it through widespread lectures and activities where folks can learn and experience some of the history and practices that are reflected in our current day.

Despite the frigid weather, fifteen people attended including nine from the community and six from the church. (However, four of those from the church are the YAH staff.) We encourage more from the church to attend to enjoy the programs and fellowship. It was a great day!

Here is the schedule of planned events occurring in 2026:

- **February 18-Annette Fisher, Greeting Card history and making a card**
- **March 18- Dannenhower Honey Farm**
- **April 15- Jane Choc, Art and Stuffed Animals**
- **May 20- TBA**
- **June 17- Possible Civil War history with artifacts**

Many thanks to our presenters, but also to the Young at Heart team: Marcia Keiser, Sharon Kozlowski, Sandi Madeira. Also, kudos to Barb Merkel for support, printing materials, creating the posters, and advertising. And thank you to those members who are generous in donating refreshments.

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

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Susan Conrad	March 1
Doris Weiser	March 5
Brian Beck	March 6
Lynn Hilbert	March 6
Karen Werley	March 7
Hailey Bauscher	March 8
Lamar Bailey	March 10
Allison Harris	March 12
Christine Diltz	March 15
Sandra Madeira	March 16
Rosaria Angstadt	March 18
Daryn Keim	March 19
Lucas Moyer	March 19
Danette Seidel	March 22
Brodie Kutzler	March 24
Rob Rhodes	March 27
Jeremiah Schwalm	March 27
Charlotte Diehl	March 28
Fern Kline	March 29
Grant Fitzgerald	March 30
Judith Heffley	March 30



GRACE NOTES

I was privy to a conversation the other day where someone was talking about donating to the church and how they could not always donate monetarily but were able to donate their time.

Do you know that every person, regardless of who they are, is granted 86,400 seconds each day.

I remember sitting in a church service where the Pastor gave us a strip of paper labeled from one to one hundred. He instructed us to tear the paper at our age. He calmly said, "This is the time you have left." What a visual! It makes you realize, time is one of the most valuable things we have. Once it passes, we cannot get it back.

I am saying, we all need to value our time. Every moment is a chance to grow, learn, and enjoy life. Spend time with your family, work on your goals, relax and have fun. Do not waste your time because this means you are missing wonderful opportunities.

Stop saying, I will do it tomorrow, or later, or whenever. Understanding the value of time helps us appreciate each day and make the most of every second.

So, I say thank you to this member of our church who takes her valuable time and gratefully shares it with St. Paul's.

- Barbara Merkel



The First Aid/CPR/AED training class will be held on Saturday, March 14, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The instructor is Tammy Biehl who represents the American Heart Association. Please come on time since there is a lot to cover. Also bring a bag lunch, and the church will offer drinks and snacks. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes.

Ten participants will be in the class and after successful training, each person will be eligible to receive a certificate valid for two years. The training is free, but if you decide to purchase a book, it costs \$25. Let Kathy Landis know if you have any questions.

Greeting Card Ministry

A message has been received from Ann Burrows that this ministry needs blank notecards. If you can help, please drop off the cards at the church office.

Thank you to this group for their thoughtful service to our congregation.

RELAY FOR LIFE - ANGELS OF HOPE

It is time to sign-up to be a member of the Relay for Life. Our team is "Angels of Hope."

The deadline for completion of Purple Signs is earlier this year, so we need to start selling now.

Please join us for the fun. Our theme this year is "Heroes."

All ideas are appreciated.

Thank you.

Denise Keim

EASTER COOKIE SALE

Pound - \$12.00

Cut-out cookies for sale by Women's Guild. Orders due by Sunday, March 22nd, Pick-up on Sunday, March 29th after worship. To order call or email the church office.

(610) 683-3393

office@stpaulskutztown.org

Any questions, please contact Denise Keim.

MARCH 2026

Worship—10:15 AM (FELLOWSHIP AFTER WORSHIP EACH SUNDAY)

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 Pastor Sunday 3 PM Rejoicing Spirits	2 6 PM Yoga 6-8 PM Mice Wkshop	3 10 AM Worship Mtg 7 PM Bible Study	4	5 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6-9 PM Lions Club (FH) 6:15 PM Bells	6	7 9:30 AM Yoga
8 Easter Homebound Project	9 6 PM Yoga 6-8 PM Mice Wkshop	10	11 7 PM Consistory	12 10:30 AM Lenten Study (FH) 5-9 PM K B Cougars 6:15 PM Bells	13 7:30 Kutztown Folk Music Maddy Kas	14 9 AM Prayer Walk 9:30 AM Yoga
15 1-3 PM Piano Recital (Sanctuary) Easter Homebound Project PUlse DEADLINE	16 6-8 PM Mice Wkshop 6 PM Yoga 6:30 PM Fellowship 6:45 PM Missions	17 6-8 PM Relay-K-Town 7 PM Bible Study	18 10AM-Noon Young at Heart	19 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6-9 PM Lions Club (L) 9AM -9PM H & H Quilters (FH)	20	21 9:30 AM yoga
22	23 6 PM Yoga 6-8 PM Mice Wkshop	24 7 PM Christian Ed	25 6 PM Personnel (L)	26 10:30 AM Lenten Study (FH) 5-9 PM KB Cougars 6:15 PM Bells	27	28 9:30 AM yoga
29 PALM SUNDAY Folding of the Palms Pastor Search Com- mittee Mtg. After Worship	30 6 PM Yoga 6-8 PM Mice Wkshop 7 PM Property	31				