

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

JULY VOL 57 #7

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



Join us for Fellowship Hour

Staying for coffee and conversation offers several tangible benefits:

- **Deepens Connections:** Move beyond a simple "hello" by learning about others' lives, careers, and shared interests.
- **Provides Mutual Support:** It creates a space to carry each other's burdens and celebrate milestones together.
- **Encourages Spiritual Growth:** Discussing the sermon and life experiences with fellow believers helps keep you accountable and encouraged.
- **It transitions people** from a quick nod in the pews to meaningful conversations where they can share life updates, joys, and struggles.



Faith can move mountains, but do not be surprised if God hands you a shovel.

MAY 2026

\$21,344.75



\$18,685.94

From the Desk of our Interim Pastor

A few years ago, while serving a congregation in Connecticut, I was in the production of the Verdi opera, *Otello*, by a local community opera company. My church was the venue. It was a fabulous show – lots of talented people. I was in the chorus, along with twenty other people. The rehearsing was intense!

The director was a real slave driver. He gave us directions for the blocking of each scene and then made us rehearse them over and over – tweaking it each time. He gave us all kinds of directions, some of which seemed minor, but when we did what he asked, the energy jumped and the whole scene would come alive. He was drawing out some really fine performances from us which was remarkable since most of those in the chorus were amateur musicians - doing it for love, not the money.

And yet, it can be hard to stay focused on one's seemingly small chorus role when the spotlight is on the principals – the main singers. So, unintentionally you let down your energy level. Lose a bit of focus. Resulting in seemingly little things, such as extraneous movement of the head or hands. All of this – he persuasively showed us - distracts from the audience's overall experience and diminishes the overall impact of the show.

It reminded me of what the apostle, Paul, wrote to the early Christians in Corinth about everyone's role being important:

- “Indeed, the body does not consist of one member, but of many. If the foot would say, ‘because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body, that would not make it any less a part of the body.’” (1 Corinthians. 12:14-15)

The director kept telling us: “You’ve got to really *believe* in what you are doing. “If *you* don’t believe your role is important, how do you expect the audience to?” His favorite quip was: “There are no small roles, only small actors.”

For actors, success or failure is not determined by the size of your part, the amount of time in the spotlight, or your good looks and charisma. Rather, it's determined by whether or not you are fully focused on it, pouring all your energy and attention in it – into *your* part.

- “If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?” (1 Cor. 12:17)

It's similar in life. And if you're a Christian, success is determined not by the size of your role or job, but by whether or not you allow the love and grace of God to fill it through you. Paul expressed it perfectly in Galatians 2:20, “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.” No matter what job you do, it can be important – you *make it important* – when you let Christ live through you as you perform it. We make it big by infusing it with God's love and grace.

There are no small roles, only small actors. There are no small roles in serving God, only small Christians – Christians with small imaginations of the power of God's grace.

Regardless of where you are in the span of life, as Christians, Jesus calls each of us to play an essential role in his ministry of life, unconditional love, forgiveness, and compassion. One that no one else can play for us, and one that fills you with a deep sense of purpose and joy.

There are no small roles, not when you invest it with the grace and love of God.

Christlove,

Rev. Jim

ARE YOU ALONE?

Loneliness is a silent ache that many of us carry, often hidden behind busy schedules and crowded rooms. You can be surrounded by people at work, constantly connected on social media, or even sitting in a church pew, and still feel completely isolated. It is that sinking feeling that no one truly sees you, understands your struggles, or walks beside you in your pain. This sense of isolation can be overwhelming, leading us to believe the lie that we are navigating this life entirely on our own. When the house is quiet at night or when a difficult season stretches on with no end in sight, the question whispers in our hearts: "Am I truly alone?"

The answer from God's Word is a definitive and comforting "no." While human companionship may falter or fade, the presence of God is a constant reality. He is not a distant deity watching from afar; He is a personal Father who has promised to walk every step of the journey with you. The scripture in Deuteronomy reminds us that He goes with us—He is active in our lives, moving ahead to prepare the way and walking beside us to offer strength. His promise to never leave nor forsake you is not just a nice sentiment; it is a covenant bond that cannot be broken by your circumstances, your feelings, or your mistakes.

If you are feeling the weight of loneliness today, let this truth settle deep into your spirit. You are seen, known, and cherished by the Creator of the universe. In your quietest moments, He is there, listening to the prayers you have not even spoken. Invite Him into your solitude. Turn your lonely moments into times of intimate connection with Him.

Thought of the Day

When you shift your focus from who is not there to Who is, the sting of loneliness begins to fade, replaced by the warm, reassuring embrace of God who has been with you all along.

- Dr. Joe Pettigrew

Church Staff

Rev. Dr. James Latimer.....Interim Pastor
Barbara MerkelAdmin Assistant
Editor

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 WeidaFinancial 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>

Forwarding

All

Issues

To

Heaven



Pastor Jim Schlegel was the lead for our June service. Carl F. read from the Spark Bible. This passage told us that Jesus said, "Love your enemies." If someone hurts you, do not hurt them back. He also told us to pray for people who are mean to you. This is not always easy to do!

Pastor Jim's message was "Who Are We Following?" With help from Chris and Hannah, Pastor Jim demonstrated that it is not always easy to follow the leader. He stressed that Jesus is our leader and we must try to follow his lead even when it is difficult. Our craft for the day was Be More Than Kind.

Thanks to all the volunteers who participated in the worship service and the set up for fellowship.

Our next worship service will be on July 5th. We will be joined by Pastor Angela Zimmann from Mosaic. Pastor Angela will join us prior to worship to hear our Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County stories, successes, and questions. She will also join us for fellowship after the service.

Fellowship time will feature a picnic-themed celebration. Please join us for hot dogs, ice cream, watermelon, and other snacks as we celebrate America's 250th birthday!

- Erin Webb, Co-Chair of Rejoicing Spirits of Eastern Berks County





at St. Paul's UCC

As many of you remember, for several months after Jan Lenich retired as the sexton at St. Paul's, we were without a sexton/custodian. Fortunately, Sue Kunkel stepped up to fill the position of custodian.

At the same time, Barb Merkel received a message from Kutztown High School's School to Work Coordinator asking if we would consider a work crew from the School To Work program. Barb passed the message along to me and an amazing relationship was born! Finding work experience for students with disabilities had been part of my job before I retired so how could I say no!

Beginning in March, two students and a job coach began basic cleaning at St. Paul's. Every Monday from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm we worked together learning the tasks required while developing interpersonal skills and increasing independence. These students vacuumed the sanctuary and hallway, emptied the trash, wiped down the tables in Fellowship Hall, helped with prepping the purple signs for Relay and so much more.

The feedback from the students and staff was beyond my expectations.

Jaisen graduated on May 28th and is currently employed part-time while looking for full-time employment. When asked what the best part of the experience was, he responded, "being able to be here at the church. I really wish I could stay."

The School to Work Coordinator shared the following, "I really want to thank you for opening up the church doors to him. Although he was with you for a brief moment, you have made a lasting impact and planted seeds in his life. You have helped to build his resume, develop confidence, and allow him to know what healthy relationships look like."

The second student, Curtis, will be a senior next year. He will be returning to St. Paul's this summer, working at the church Tuesday mornings for two hours as part of his Extended School Year program. During this time, he and I will take on new tasks to further develop his work skills.

I have watched Curtis become much more independent and take initiative but most of all his personality has just blossomed! His Special Education teacher has commented about how much he has grown!

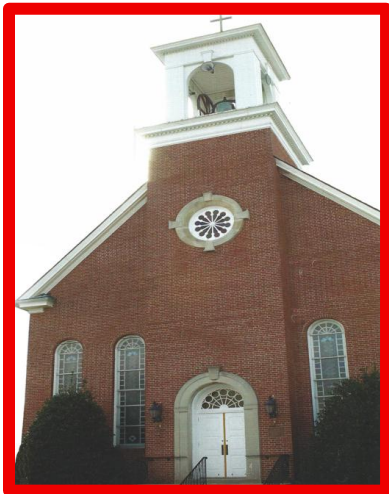
The STW coordinator said, "Thank you so much for your willingness to help guide Curtis and give him a supportive place to work on his school to work skills!!"

Special thanks to the Personnel Committee for allowing this unique opportunity, to Sue Kunkel for her cooperation and communication, to Barb Merkel for encouraging me to pursue this opportunity with the school, and to Pal Eckert (representing the Women's Guild) for surprising the boys with a gift, snacks, and lunch. To say they were ecstatic is an understatement!

Blessings,
Erin Webb

Greetings from Consistory

Kathy Landis, Consistory President



Facility Use Agreement

Erin Webb and Barb Merkel (comprising the Facility Use Agreement Committee) proposed updated fees for outside groups to use the kitchen. A charge of \$100 will be assessed to those groups using electric kitchen appliances (refrigerator, oven, etc.). A charge of \$150 will be assessed to use gas kitchen appliances (gas oven, stove, or dishwasher). In addition, rental of the kitchen to those groups using gas appliances is contingent upon securing the assistance of a church member who is knowledgeable of the operation of the gas appliances. The process was approved.

Renewal of Reverend Jim's Call Agreement

Reverend Jim said that he would be willing to serve as three-quarter time Interim Pastor for another twelve (12) months for the church with the option for either party (church or pastor) to negotiate a shorter or longer term of service to assist with the Pastor Search process. Motion passed unanimously to renew Rev. Jim's term of service until September 2027 with no change in compensation and eight weeks of vacation and four weeks of continuing education. Reverend Jim showed a video concerning his volunteering work with the Kibo Alliance, which provides education and support to rural community leaders in the areas of leadership and sustainable farming practices. He mentioned that his obligations as a board member of this group have necessitated an increase in his time away from the church and he appreciates Consistory's understanding of the importance he places on this mission work.

It was suggested that instead of getting a supply pastor to cover each absence that the worship committee consider other alternatives, such as a thoughtful hymnal-based service and other options to be developed by the Worship Committee.

Faith Moments

Reverend Jim said that he will offer members of the church the opportunity to offer "Faith Moments" during the Sunday Service prayer time starting on Sunday, June 14th. These would be short, personalized messages describing how faith has impacted their lives.

Keystone Conference

Rev. Jim attended both June 5 and 6, and Kathy Landis attended Saturday, June 6, 2026, at Millersville University. It was an inspirational and amazing experience with so many people from different churches all in one place. The idea for the creation of the Keystone Conference is that "Together We Are Stronger." One presentation proved that to be true as the pastor of the Trinity Church from Allegheny County, which had a devastating fire in May, received a gift of \$10,000 from the conference and another \$50,000 from one church which had a generous donor. Another outstanding impression was the large amount of food and toiletries donated by 110 churches in the Easter Food Challenge. The primary goal this year for Keystone is to address food insecurity.





Fire Protection At the beginning of the July 8th meeting, the Kutztown Fire Department will demonstrate how to effectively use a fire extinguisher.

Background Checks

Christian Ed volunteers will need to renew their background checks. Louise Moyer will provide notice to the affected volunteers. Others outside of the Christian Ed group may also need their background check renewed. See Barbara for clarification.



To date ninety-five people have been removed as members, some for lacking the bylaws criteria, others who requested to be removed, and letters returned by the postal service. However, their names will remain in the church's records as past members. The next round of letters is due June 16th.



Future fellowship hours will be contingent on people signing up to prepare the refreshments. It can be simple: a drink and cookies, as an example. The main point of the fellowship is for members to spend time catching up with one another. Please sign up on the sheet outside the office.

Thanks to all the dedicated members of the Consistory for their support of the congregation's best interests. All were present at this meeting. However, there were few committee reports completed for the meeting. Remember the purpose of these reports is to improve our communications with others in the church to keep them informed about what valuable things your committee is doing or planning so they can be aware, offer help or thank you for all you are doing. Please send your committee's report to the office the week ahead of the next Consistory meeting scheduled for July 8, 2026.



YOUNG AT HEART

On Wednesday, May 20, Young at Heart featured Brian Engelhardt from the Berks History Center. The “Robbery of the Century” came to life as it happened on February 4, 1921.

Brian related the story of the dramatic daylight event at the Peoples Trust Company (no longer in existence) in Wyomissing where approximately \$187,000 (about \$3.1 million in today’s currency) was stolen. The telling of the tale included the manhunt and heroic detective work that resulted in the capture of the six perpetrators and the recovery of most of the funds. It took some time to investigate the crime, but with the help of key witnesses including the girlfriend of one of the gang members, all of the robbers were accounted for and/or brought to justice. Key players included the at-the-time District Attorney (future judge), Richard Mays, and other municipal authorities. Out of town detectives and the fearless women involved were key to solving the case. Some of the robbers were sentenced to prison terms and one committed suicide.

Before the opening prayer, a poem, “The Weight of Shadows and Chains” was recited. Here is an excerpt from the last stanza of the poem:

So, remember the cost of the choices we make,
The consequences that follow, the paths that we take,
For in the dance of life, we must learn to perceive,
That justice awaits, whether we believe or deceive.

The program was like a mystery program including the situation, the crime, the characterization of each of the robbers, and the stories of the people who assisted in the resolution of the crime and capture of the gang. It was an amazing historical remembrance right here in Berks County more than one hundred years ago. It included photos of the robbers, some of the witnesses, and even the getaway car, all well documented. Brian made the tale one of interest with humorous remarks thrown in.

Here is the YAH schedule for future events occurring in 2026:

- **July 15- Jaunting Abroad (world tour in 1968) by David Bullock**
- **August 19- Older Order Mennonites’ culture and history (clothing, one-room schoolhouse, PA Dutch language, etc.) by Mary Laub, author**
- **September 16- Weaving a “Witches Hat “with Debbie Zvanut**

Many thanks to our presenters, but also to the Young at Heart team: Sharon Kozlowski, Sandi Madeira, and Ethel Beck. Also, kudos to Barb Merkel for support, printing materials, creating the posters, and advertising. We are accepting refreshment donations, so please leave them in the kitchen marked for YAH. Thanks for your contributions!

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.** The program is held every month including the summer months. If you would like to attend, sign up on the attendance sheet posted outside the office or just show up.

Submitted by Kathy Landis

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY

Born
in
July

Kevin Kulp	July 2
Scarlett Unger	July 5
Matthew Diehl	July 7
Thomas Luckenbill	July 8
Gary Fritz	July 10
Carolyn Ordway	July 12
Todd O'Neil	July 12
Bradley Schwalm	July 13
Jessica Rhodes	July 14
Marjorie Weida	July 15
Laraine Wuchter	July 18
Kelly Monroe	July 19
Mary Steltz	July 21
Janet Haas	July 23
Ryan Kulp	July 23
John Keiser, Jr.	July 24
Brenda Grider	July 28
Steven Steltz, Jr.	July 29
Thomas Merkel, Jr.	July 30
Caleb Heffley	July 31
Gautham Heffley	July 31



GRACE NOTES

What if God could not take the time to bless us today because we could not take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we did not follow him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God did not walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if God took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to His messenger?

What if God did not send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to prepare to pay the price of sin?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him yesterday?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answered His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

What if we failed to pass this message on?

- Anonymous



Hi Kids,

Are you ready for another exciting VBS Adventure? I am Kody and I am inviting you to St. Paul's to join me on my True North Journey from July 19th through July 23rd from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM.

If you have not yet registered your children, grandchildren, and their friends for an exciting Alaskan wilderness adventure at True North VBS, please do so as soon as possible by contacting Louise Moyer at LouiseMoyer13@gmail.com or 610-641-0507 (home landline).



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026: "TRUE NORTH"

July 19-23 (Sunday-Thursday) 6:00-8:30 p.m.
at St. Paul's UCC (Kutztown)

The St. Paul's/Trinity Combined VBS Program is back for another fun summer program: "True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World" as we journey through the Alaskan Wilderness. Please preregister as soon as possible (but no later than June 30) by completing the attached form or contacting Louise Moyer at 610-641-0507 or LouiseMoyer13@gmail.com or Alicia Wood at 610-334-0733 or akhornberger624@gmail.com. Children from preschool thru Grade 6 will have a blast! We are also looking for adult and older youth helpers. There is no charge for the program. Come and hike the journey with us!

"TRUE NORTH" VBS at St. Paul's UCC (Kutztown)

Child's Name: _____ Child's Age & Grade Next Yr: ____/____

Parent's Name: _____ Parent's Phone: _____

Emergency Contact Phone Number (during VBS): _____

Parent's Email Address: _____

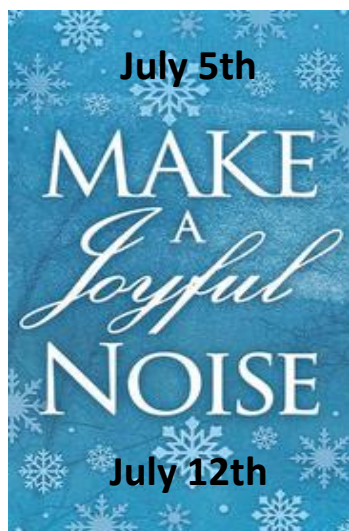
I am willing to help by:

☐ Station Leader ☐ Rotating with Classes ☐ Set-Up Decorations
☐ Station Helper ☐ Registration/Check-In

HOMELESS BOX SLEEPOUT - OPPORTUNITY HOUSE

On May 23, the Youth of St. Paul's organized a "Homeless Box Sleepout" to raise awareness of homelessness and collect needed items for Opportunity House. Thank you to all congregation members who supported our efforts with donated items. A special thank you to Chris Heffner at Clark's TV & Appliance in Fleetwood for collecting and supplying us with large boxes. The weather certainly did not cooperate, and we were forced to sleep inside (a little less authentic), but the Youth enjoyed their time together and the Mission Project was still a huge success!

ST. PAUL'S YOUTH
MAKING
A DIFFERENCE!



FOR OUR JOURNEY NORTH!!

Opportunity House has been helping the homeless population of our area since 1984. Their emergency shelter serves homeless men, women, families, and Veterans. They provide support to individuals who are experiencing homelessness to help them get back onto their feet and return to safe, stable, and affordable housing.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

July 5th - Rejoicing Spirits @ st. Paul's UCC
3:00 PM

July 11th - Prayer Walk @ Kutztown High School
9:00 AM

July 12th - July 18th - Vacation Bible School Setup
11:30/2:30 (Sunday)
6:00 - 8:30 PM (Monday-Friday)
2:00 - 6:00 PM (Saturday)

July 15th - Young at Heart - Jaunting Abroad
w/David Bullock 10:00 AM-12 Noon

July 19th - July 23rd - Vacation Bible School
True North 6:00 - 8:30 PM

July 2nd - July 5th - Eastern PA Homestead Festival

July 5th - Museum Open & Train Rides
1:00 - 4:00 PM

July 11th - Frog Holler at Kutztown Park - 7:00 PM

July 17th - Saucony Sessions w/Hannah Violet
at Saucony Brewing - 6:00 PM

July 17th - Rodale Institute Organic Field Day
8:30 AM

July 18th - Flash Train Meet @ Renninger's Market
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM

July 25th - Kutztown Kruiizz - 9:00 AM



- **Bounce batteries to see if their good or bad. Drop them on a table from about six inches. If they give one small bounce and fall right over, there are good. If they bounce around anymore than that, they are dead or on the way out.**
- **Add one teaspoon of baking soda when boiling eggs. It will make the shell come off effortlessly.**
- **Rub a walnut on damaged wooden furniture to cover up dings.**
- **Rub stuck zipper teeth with a graphite pencil tip to fix them.**
- **Put a wooden spoon across a boiling pot of water to keep it from boiling over.**

RECIPE FROM THE KITCHEN OF *Christine Keim* *Ramon Noodle Salad*

Salad ingredients:

2 (3 oz.) packages chicken flavored Ramen Noodles
broken into pieces, seasoning packet reserved
½ cup raw sunflower seeds
½ cup almond slivers
10 oz. package coleslaw mix
3 green onions chopped

Dressing:

½ cup olive oil
3 Tbsp. white vinegar
1 Tbsp. white sugar
½ tsp. black pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Spread ramen noodles, sunflower seeds, and almonds evenly on a baking sheet. Bake in oven until fragrant and toasted. (10-15 mins.) Set aside to come to room temperature. Combine coleslaw mix and green onions in a large bowl. Sprinkle the cooled ramen noodles, sunflower seeds, and almonds over the mix. Whisk olive oil, vinegar, reserved seasoning packets, sugar, and pepper in a small bowl until smooth. Pour dressing over mix. Toss to coat.

JULY 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	2	3	4
5 3 PM Rejoicing Spirits	6	7	8 7 PM Consistory	9	10	11 9 AM Prayer Walk
12 11:30—3:00 PM VBS Setup	13 6-8:30 PM VBS Setup	14 10 AM Worship Mtg 6-8:30 PM VBS Setup	15 PULSE DEADLINE 10AM-Noon Young at Heart 6-8:30 PM VBS Setup	16 6-8:30 PM VBS Setup	17 6-8:30 PM VBS Setup	18 2-6:00 pm VBS Setup
19 6-8:30 PM VBS	20 6-8:30 PM VBS	21 6-8:30 PM VBS	22 6-8 :30 PM VBS	23 6-8:30 PM VBS VBS Tear-Down after Conclusion	24	25
26	27 6-8 PM Mice 7 PM Property Mtg.	28	29 6 PM Personnel (L)	30	31	