



“ The Epistle Pauline ”

St. Paul's Digital Newsletter

Volume 58, Number 9 September 2025

In its life and mission St. Paul's UCC seeks to worship the triune God; proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ; practice loving service toward the needy; embody God's reign of peace and justice; establish a Christian community of faith; and be a faithful member of the church universal.

Word of the Day from Rev. Epps

Psalms 84:5 NIV

[5] Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

We all are on a pilgrimage, a journey in this life. The question is where do we draw our strength from? For Christians the answer is Christ.

It's the morning after membership Sunday and my day off, yet the Spirit drives me to awaken and write down what's on my heart for the ministry at St. Paul's.

The journey with God is not a neat yearly or weekly calendar.

The Spirit isn't waiting for your schedule or even daytime or night time of rest!

Pilgrimage with God means being prepared to receive Spiritual incite and direction anytime day or night.

This morning is just that kind of morning. In my journey with God I have to get up and write down what God is putting on my heart before the clutter of the day can clog my mind and heart with whatever the world has to say.

Okay pilgrim, have a blessed day with God's strength and Spirit written on your heart!

CONSISTORY NEWS from Curt Clifford

August CONSISTORY Meeting Highlights

Consistory met on Wednesday evening, July 13th at the home of Doug and Marianne Reinert. The session was dedicated to the annual picnic for Consistory members and their spouses, but Consistory did meet briefly to take action on some high priority items.

- **Appointments** - President Clifford made the following appointments to this year's Nominations Committee to be chaired by V. P. Jackie Hertzog: Elder Doug Reinert; Deacon Martha Sitler; and Committee Chair Kathy Weller. The Nominations Committee is defined and charged by our Church By-laws to prepare a list of members to stand for election at our Annual Meeting in November to fill the coming year's open church positions
- **Church and Ministry Recommendation for Upgrading Rev. Epps' Call Agreement-** Recognizing the superb quality of Rev. Epps' sermons, and the productive results in terms of new and renewed member interests resulting from his pastoral visits, phone calls and meetings with church groups, the committee concluded those results were worth the extra time he needs to do them; and therefore recommended his Call Agreement be upgraded from a "Half time" to a "Three-Quarter time" Minister. Consistory voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.
- **Church and Ministry Recommendation for an Interim Assistant to the Pastor** – Recognizing that Reverend Epps started at ground zero in terms of knowing the relationships of our unique committee structure, the roles of the committee members in conducting the church's business, and the names that go with the faces of some 400 + church members, the committee recommended the creation of an Interim Assistant job, and recommended approval of Kathy Weller to fill that position spending from 5 to 10 hours per week in addition to her current position of Facilities Coordinator.
Consistory voted unanimously to approve the recommendation.
- **Next Meeting** – The next meeting will be held in Room 8 of the church starting at **7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 10.**

Communion Date Change

Reminder, the green communion envelope in your offering envelope box dated for August 10 Communion has been changed to Sunday, September 7 when we return to worship in the sanctuary. You may use the August 10 communion envelope for our communion on September 7th.

Committee Spotlight!

Elders and Spiritual Council from Curt Clifford

Our Church Elders

Over the entire 50 some-odd years of my membership at St. Paul's, I have often heard people questioning what church Elders are and what they do.

OK, so here's one man's attempt to answer those questions:

What is an Elder?

At St. Paul's, our church ByLaws provide that an Elder is a church member who has been elected to that office by the Congregation after having become eligible by giving service to the church in one of two ways: Serving at least one term (two years) as an elected Deacon or serving at least two terms (four years) as an elected chair of a "Standing Committee". After becoming eligible, the member can be nominated for the office of Elder by a Nominating Committee that is appointed by the Consistory President and then can be elected to that office by a vote of the Congregation. After qualifying with service to the church, being nominated by the official committee and being duly elected by the Congregation, the member becomes an Elder.

What does an Elder do?

The first duty of an elected Elder is to serve as a member of Consistory for a two-year term and they may serve on Consistory for two consecutive two-year terms. In addition to Consistory service, currently elected Elders are charged by our ByLaws in this manner: "They shall meet as necessary to fulfill their duties for the spiritual welfare of the congregation." Upon being elected by the Congregation as an Elder, that member retains the title of Elder in perpetuity (forever). Also upon their election, all Elders automatically become members of our church Spiritual Council.

Spiritual Council composition and purpose are described in our ByLaws as follows:

I. Spiritual Council Composition

- The Pastor Serves as Chair
- All currently elected Elders as well as all formerly elected Elders of the church.

"Once an Elder, always an Elder" has become a generally accepted precept

 - There are currently 32 Elders in our church membership, seven of whom are "active" serving on Consistory. All 32 are members of the Spiritual Council.

I. Spiritual Council Purpose

- Oversee the spiritual life of the Congregation
- Assist the Pastor with serving communion
- Assist the Pastor in shut-in visitations
- Maintain the Congregation membership rolls
- Present Consistory with recommendations for the positions of President and Vice President

How the Elders accomplish the above purposes are the subjects of deliberations by the Spiritual Council.

Pastoral Search Update from Billy Harrison

Dear Church Family,

We're excited to share an update on our search for a new pastor! The Search Committee has completed our church's Local Church Profile—a big milestone in this process. This document tells potential pastors about our church, our community, and the position we're hoping to fill. It's now live on the UCC Ministry Opportunities webpage (you can check it out here: [St. Paul's UCC Profile](#))

Here's what happens next: when pastors are interested in our position, they ask Conference staff to share their profile with us. These profiles are long (22–26 pages!) and packed with information about each pastor's ministry, background, and call. Our Search Committee then prayerfully reads through them, reaches out to references, conducts interviews, watches sermons, and spends a lot of time discerning. It's careful, thoughtful work—always guided by prayer.

As the process moves forward, a candidate may be invited to visit us here at St. Paul's. That could mean touring the church, meeting people in person, and even leading a service. Some candidates might be local, while others may come from out of state. For this reason, confidentiality is important—pastors need to feel safe exploring new calls without worry for their current congregation. So while the Search Committee will share general progress (like how many profiles they've received or that they're in the interview stage), they won't be able to share names or details until the right time. We are currently receiving profiles on a rolling basis and interviewing candidates as we feel led.

When the Committee feels led to one candidate, they will ask, "If our Consistory approves our recommendation, would you be willing to stand for election at our

church?" If the candidate says yes, Consistory will finalize a Call Agreement and set the date for the congregational vote.

Through it all, we ask for your continued prayers—for the Search Committee, for the pastors discerning whether to apply, and for the future pastor God is preparing for St. Paul's. We trust that in God's time, the right leader will be called to serve alongside us.

Yours in Christ,

- Your Pastoral Search Committee

300th Anniversary Celebrations of the German Reformed Church in America

This year we will celebrate the 300th Anniversary of the German Reformed Church in the United States which began with the first communion at Falkner Swamp, Oct. 15, 1725. This celebration of our immigrant heritage is particularly meaningful and instructive given the current conversations about immigration happening around the nation.

To celebrate, a series of events and worship celebrations are planned, including (among other things) quarterly presentations of German Reformed History, a liturgy for congregations to share on the morning of Sunday, Oct. 12 and a Festival of Celebration on Wednesday, Oct. 15.

Registration is currently open for these Historic Presentations:

September 25: United and Uniting: How the UCC Makes Room for German Reformed and Armenian Evangelical Christians (Rev. Dr. Heather Ohaneson) [More info and registration](#)

October 28: Gifts of the Reformed Church Going Forward (Dr. Randall Zachman) [More info and registration](#)

Visit the [300th Anniversary Celebrations page](#) of the PSEC Website for more information.

Announcement from Dick F.

If you are an adult who has not yet found a Sunday School class, this notice is for you. Adult3 will be starting the new season on Sunday, September 7th, 8:30 am, in room 11; and you are invited to join us. The Bible is our text book, so bring yours. The agenda includes good discussion, good coffee and home made treats. We hope to see you.

Youth Ministry News from Stacey Ambrose

Youth Group is Back!

We're so excited to welcome everyone back to St. Paul's Youth Group starting Sunday, September 7th, 2025 from 7–8:30 PM!

🌟 Open to all students in grades 5–12—this is your chance to reconnect, make new friends, and kick off the year with faith, fun, and fellowship.

📅 Parents: We'll have a brief parent meeting at the start of our first night (September 7th) before the youth activities begin.

🎉 Don't miss it—come ready for laughter, connection, and a fresh start with St. Paul's Youth Group!

Circle of Friends from Carol Sterner

The White Caps of Pearl Harbor

The St. Paul's Circle of Friends will host Winifred Foster Woll on September 9th at 1:00 for her presentation, "The Nurses of Pearl Harbor". Winnie is the current chairperson for the Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors. She will share the stories of her mother, who was a nurse in Oahu at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, and others she has met in the association. Plan to meet for a light lunch at 12:00 and help us provide a warm welcome for her.

All are welcome!

Welcoming Our Newest Members!

We are very blessed to have 8 new members join our church family. Please reach out to them and make them welcome.

Josh Clayton Nagle Geckle &

Chloe Elizabeth Geckle Nagle

Josh & Chloe have been coming to St. Paul's for the past three years. Their 2 year old daughter Vivian was baptized here. Josh is an IT/Software Engineer and works for Constellation Energy. Chloe is an Aerospace Engineer and works for Lockheed-Martin.





Amanda Wise Pizzollo

Amanda is a stay-at-home mom to her two children, Sam and June. Sam has been attending Sunday School and June enjoys the Nursery. Amanda's husband Jason works at GSK.

Sandee L. Burns

Sandee has re-joined St. Paul's and we are happy to have her back among our flock. She works at Mary's Shelter as the Human Resource Director. Sandee has jumped in with both feet and you will see her singing in the choir, as well as on several committees.



Steve & Kim Ring

Steve & Kim were also previous members of St. Paul's who felt compelled to come back. Steve is the Director of a research organization and Kim is a self-employed Psychotherapist. They were originally brought to St. Paul's many years ago by their children who had friends who attended here. We are happy to have them back with us.

Brad & Vivien Richards

Brad & Vivien are members of St. John's UCC Gibraltar, where they first met Rev. Epps. They are both musicians with degrees in music education. Brad works at Reading High School, where he is the Director of Orchestral Studies and teaches piano. Vivien serves her family as a stay-at-home mom, and is a trained vocalist. They have 3 children, Catherine, Liam, and Colin, who are looking forward to joining our Sunday School program. (Photo not available at time of circulation,)

Soup Needed for Craft Sale

The 4th Annual Craft/Vendor Sale is being held Saturday September 20th from 10 AM - 3 PM. We are again looking for all of you wonderful cooks to whip up a batch or two of your favorite soup for the Soup Sale that day. As in the past, we will provide the plastic quart containers for your soup. Last year we had about 110 quarts to sell. Let's see if we can break the record. There will be a signup sheet in the library so that we can see what types of soup

everyone is making. Please take one of the papers on "Cooling Soup Safely" so that we do not risk selling soup that is spoiled. Mark the type of soup on the top of the container with a marker or a sticker. Deliver your soup, chilled or frozen, to Fellowship Hall on Friday 9/19 after 3 PM or Saturday before 9 AM. If you have any questions, please contact Jackie Hertzog.

[Craft/Vendor Fair](#) from Kathy Weller

The Committee has been busy with planning and we're hoping for a successful craft event. We would like to thank everyone in the congregation who has volunteered in one way or another to help with this event. We're asking you to help us one more time, by coming out to our event on September 20th between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm and supporting our crafters and vendors, and also supporting the church by purchasing soup, shoo-fly pies, and apple and peach crisp. We anticipate having at least 40 vendors in our Fellowship Hall. This is a time of fellowship and also a great time to show our community how blessed we are at St. Paul's UCC. Let's show how welcoming and loving we are. We hope to see you there.

[Christian Ed News](#) from Marlene Dadey

[Sunday School Kick-Off](#) – We will kick off a new Sunday School season on Sunday, September 7. Children are invited to attend the beginning of worship with their parents. Following an introduction of the Sunday School staff, a blessing of the backpacks (don't forget yours), and a children's message the children will be dismissed to their classrooms for a fun activity. If parents are not planning to attend the service, staff will be available in the front for children to sit with, although we encourage parents to attend.

[Sunday School for Children](#) – Children ages 3 (by September 1) through grade 6 are invited to join us for a Sunday School lesson weekly at 9:45 AM. The younger children) ages 3 through grade 2 meet in Room #9. The older children grades 3-6 meet in Room #8.

[Confirmation](#) – Confirmation begins Sunday, September 14 following worship in Room #8. We will meet with the confirmands and their parents this week. Regular class resumes on Sunday, September 21.

[Adult Sunday School](#) – Adult classes will resume on September 7. Adult classes meet from 8:30 – 9:30 on the lower level of the FLMC. If you are not already

participating in one of the classes we encourage you to try each of them and decide which is the best fit for you.

Nursery Service During Worship – During worship the nursery is available for infants, ones, twos and some threes. Children who have turned 3 prior to September 1, 2025 are encouraged to attend the Younger Sunday School group in Room #9.

Sunday School Staff - We welcome back Karen Hartline, Janet Knauer, Lisa Bonslaver, Erika Pauley, Linda Okuniewski, Debbie Davis, Steve Pauley, Stacey Ambrose, and Wendy Elser. We are delighted to welcome a number of new team members: Kristi and Billy Harrison, Amanda Pizzollo, Wendy Wunderlich, and Jen Leady.

Fall Fest – Mark your calendars for our Fall Fest, sponsored by the Christian Ed and Youth Ministry Committees. EVERYONE is invited to join us in Fellowship Hall after worship on Sunday, October 26. More details in the October newsletter.

SPLASH News From Marlene Dadey

Summer SPLASH - It was a very busy summer for our SPLASH kids! This was our 10th year for Summer SPLASH. They welcomed their weekly pool visits with the hot weather. Field trips included: The Crayola Factory, The Upper Schuylkill Valley Park, a movie at the State Theater, the Boyertown Park, a Reading Phillies game, a visit to Chuck's Auto Salvage, mini golfing, The Reading Public Museum and jumping at Nova Adventure Park. Charlie Harley, Judy Reitz, and Martha Sitler each did a presentation with the children. Winnie Hayik and Janet Knauer did a weekly cooking class with the children. Marianne Reinert substituted one week for the cooks! They had lots of activities based around the following themes: World Records, Hawaii, Animals, Water, Theater, Messy Things, Christmas in July, Boxes, Mardi Gras and Colors. Check out the SPLASH Facebook page Splash at St. Paul's UCC to see all the fun the children had this summer. We are very thankful for our summer staff: Laura Levengood, Dana Moyer, Michelle Miller, Phoebe Dougherty, Ahnika Smale, Paige Link (lifeguard) and Donna Kriczky (sub).

On August 25 we will kick-off our school year. This is our sixteenth year! We started with only a few children after school who were in middle school, added more children and included grades 3-8, added before school, added summer full-days, added children in grades 1 and 2 and finally added kindergarten students. WOW! This year we have a total of 35 children between kindergarten and seventh grade who are before

and/or after school. A big thank you to our staff: Laura Levensgood, Dana Moyer, Michelle Miller, and Ahnika Smale.

Scouting America News Troop 597 from Samantha Henry



Summer was slowing down a little but not stopping! Scouts spent several nights as the clean up crew at the Reading Phillies games and our popcorn sales have kicked off.

Our latest Eagle Scout project was completed by Kaden Schiel. Kaden led a team of scouts, band members and friends to rehabilitate the band storage facility at the Daniel Boone High school. The band has been using the old kitchen area in the annex building, but the storage was not organized. Kaden and his team built new shelving and racks and re-organized both equipment and uniform storage.

Keep an eye out as we have several scouts who will be presenting to their Eagle Board of Review in September, and it will be a big year as we have multiple scouts in the final processes of this journey. Good things are happening here!

Our leaders are spending a weekend at Daniel Boone Homestead at the end of August to run a “start-stop-continue” breakdown of the troop functions for a better program. This was previously done in January in past years but we feel it will help to start the newest scout year off on the right foot. Some committee members will also join them on Saturday evening to open the lines of communication across everyone. It takes a team and all of us working together to make our program great!

At the beginning of September, we will be holding a junior leader “boot-camp” of sorts for those in specific positions. This helps prepare our youth leaders for leading scouts in the upcoming year.

Our family picnic and parent meeting will be held on Monday, September 8th with our first Monday night meeting of the new year starting on the 15th. Our first trip of the year? – Hersheypark for weekend camping and fun!

We are open to any youth – male or female – between 11 and 18 who wish to join us for fun activities in the outdoors and learning leadership skills. If your son or daughter or anyone that you know would like to join us, please stop in on a Monday night between 7-8:30 or contact Rick Henry at scoutmaster597@gmail.com or 484-332-9455. If you would like to help as an adult, we can always use another pair of hands. Per youth and BSA rules, all adults in contact with youth must complete youth protection training and have background checks in place.

Committee Spotlight!

St. Paul's Guldin Trust Committee from Wendy Elser

In 1981, our church established the Guldin Trust Committee following the will of Ethel Smith Guldin, a community member who left a large amount of funds to our

church, with the specifications that the money given be placed in a trust fund and “the income whereof shall be applied toward the education of deserving persons in the church congregation as may be decided by the church authorities.”

Every fall, the committee of five (each committee member being approved by Consistory to serve a five year term) accepts applications for scholarship money from deserving church members. To be eligible to receive funds for an Educational Grant, the applicant must be a full-time or part-time student in the current fall semester and enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in the upcoming spring semester. To be a “deserving church member,” an applicant must demonstrate his or her regular participation in the life of the church. The committee wants to see an applicant who attends worship services on a regular basis, takes Communion on a regular basis, contributes financially to the church, as well as participates in Missions Projects, church events, and other activities. For those who are further away at college, we look to see they have done these prior to going off to college, that they are active here when home on breaks, and that they have become active in a church close to their school. Once the committee looks over all applications following the November 15 deadline, interview dates are set up with the applicant and the Trust Committee. There is no age limit to apply for a Guldin Trust Scholarship and you may receive a Scholarship up to five times, reapplying each fall. Scholarship money is awarded in January with checks going directly to the institution for tuition purposes only.

So, if you are currently in college, trade school, or any other form of higher education, have been a member of St. Paul’s UCC for at least three years, and are active in the life and missions of our church, you should look into applying for a Guldin Trust Scholarship. The Guldin Trust Scholarship Guidelines and Application can be found in the church office or on the church’s website.

<https://www.stpaulsuccamity.org/> Application Deadline is November 15, 2025.

Missions Collections from Michele Ross

It's Back to School time!

Missions is collecting school supplies for Fostering Hope AND Mary’s Shelter students. There are lists available in the library for the needs of each organization.

There will be bins available for BOTH. Please drop your donations in the appropriate bin.

We will collect the school supplies until Sept 14.

FYI-Target and Walmart have some great deals on supplies.

We are also still collecting food/snacks for Fostering Hope

Drop in the shopping cart in library or table in back of FLMC.

At this time we are putting a "HOLD" on collecting all items for the Caring Closet until later in the fall until we see what they have and their needs are. Watch for updates.

Thank you for all you do to help those in need in our communities.

Bible Study on "The Chosen"

I am sure that many of you have watched – or at least heard of – "The Chosen, the streaming television series (now in its fifth season) on the life of Jesus. People of all ages and with a wide range of Biblical expertise have found that the films present the stories of Jesus and his followers in a fresh and dramatic way.

The series' first season introduced the audience to Mary Magdalene, the disciples Matthew and Simon Peter, and the Pharisee Nicodemus and helps us to see how and why each of them was CHOSEN by Jesus. It is also meant to help each of us understand that we too have been chosen.

It has been suggested that we offer a Bible Study based on "The Chosen" and it seems logical that we start at the beginning of the series. Each video is about 60 minutes plus time for discussion of questions from a Study Guide written by the creators of the programs.

We are hoping to begin in early September.

If you are interested or would like more information, please talk with Martha Sitler, or email her at sitlers@ptd.net.

Oley Fair

Each year the Oley Fair Association asks for volunteers from surrounding churches and organizations to help at the refreshment stands. The assigned time slots are 9-1, 1-4 and 4-10 from Thursday, Sept. 18th. through Sat. Sept. 20th. Volunteers will receive an entry parking pass for the fair and our church will receive compensation for each participants' time. To sign up, contact Linda Levengood at 610-689-5536 (text) or email Levengood.linda@gmail.com. Youth must be 16 or older.

September Birthdays

Sept 2 Logan Krause
Sept 3 Rod Norman

September Anniversaries

Sept 3 Eric & Melissa Lizbinski
Sept 5 Steven & Kimberly Ring

Jen Kovach
Sept 4 Alexa Geisler, James Harrison
Kelly Yanos
Sept 5 Wendy Wunderlich
Sept 7 Nathan Bonslaver
Sept 8 Curtis Clifford
Sept 10 Sheila Ketterer
Sept 11 Connie Morgan
Sept 12 Judy LaBelle, Lyla Maskeri
Sept 14 Evie Griffith, Karen Hartline
Sept 16 Debra Boyer
Sept 17 Bernie Shustack
Sept 19 Gail Watts
Sept 21 Ethan Armstrong
Sept 22 Brodie Kulakowsky
Sept 23 Marian Kirlin, Deanne Leech
Sept 24 Jayce Pauley, Barbara Thompson
Sue Wunderlich
Sept 25 Benjamin Spotts
Sept 26 Brent Kneer, Caleb Lizbinski
Sept 27 Will Falstich
Sept 28 Kelsey Ross
Sept 29 Bob Moore Sr., Stacey Ambrose
Sept 30 Kerry Kuhn

Sept 9 John & Betsy Groller
Sept 11 Randy & Michelle Walker
Sept 14 Robert & Kathy Jones,
Doug & Marianne Reinert,
Doug & Kathy Samsel
Clayton & Michelle Schreyer
Sept 15 Paul & Judy Leister
Sept 18 Paul & Sandy Sekulski
Sept 19 Ken & Ruth Biles
Ken & Debbie Davis
Brent & Priscilla Knerr
Sept 21 Richard & Gail Plank
Sept 23 Rod and Brenda Norman
Sept 24 Harold and Jennifer Blevins

September Greeters

Sept 7- Doug & Marianne Reinert
Sept 14- Sandy Sekulski
Sept 21- Paul & Diane Kopec
Sept 28- Donald & Linda Breitenstein

Go Digital If You Can from Kay Nyman

If you have an email address please consider subscribing to the Weekly Word and monthly Newsletter digital versions. You can read them and refer back to them on your phone, tablet, or computer as long and as often as you wish.

In the digital version you may also receive more detailed articles and pictures than we are able to put in the printed version. This helps us keep paper and ink costs down and also allows us to continue to mail the newsletter to those without email for the cost of one stamp.

If you would like to enjoy colorful images and full length articles, please consider going digital. Contact Marlene Dadey to be added to the church email list.

The Communications Committee

Just for fun...!

Do you have memories, photos or stories you would like to share with your Church family? Send them to us and we will include them in the 'Just for Fun!' section of the newsletter for everyone to enjoy!

The Suggestion Box!

What do you want to see in the newsletter? Let us know your thoughts and we'll try to include them in the Newsletter or Weekly Word. Let us know. Tell us what you think! We want to hear from you! eMail us at Communications@stpaulsuccamity.org or reach out to Kay Nyman, Committee Chair: k.nyman@stpaulsuccamity.org,

We appreciate and need your donations!

Expenses are going up, up, up, for everyone and that includes our expenses here at St. Paul's UCC. Please prayerfully consider giving a little extra in the offering plate each week if you can!

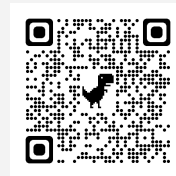
We can't do this without you!



Want to give online? You can support St. Paul's, make a Memorial Donation, help Disaster Relief Victims, and help us with HVAC repairs - all online. It's easy to give on your mobile device at

<https://stpaulsuccamity.churchcenter.com/giving>

Or Scan the QR Code.



To read the weekly word scan the QR Code here.



This edition of the monthly newsletter was prepared by Wendy Elser.

October Newsletter Deadline: Friday, September 19, 2025.

[Click Here to Read More on our Website](#)

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