

St. Paul's Epistle

St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 20 South Peters St., New Oxford, PA 17350
Phone 717-624-4238

March / April 2026

Pastor's Column

As we prepare to celebrate Easter, we rejoice in the victory and hope found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What once seemed like defeat on the cross became the greatest triumph in history. The empty tomb reminds us that death does not have the final word—life does. Darkness does not overcome the light—hope rises.

Easter assures us that God is faithful to His promises. Because Christ lives, we have forgiveness, new beginnings, and the confidence that nothing can separate us from His love. In a world that often feels uncertain, the resurrection anchors our faith and renews our courage even in our most difficult times when we walk through the shadows. We recognize their presence. We come face to face with shadows.

Shadows. We recognize their presence. We come face to face with shadows throughout this very week, don't we?

A hunter's tree stand becomes a site of controversy, and suddenly shots ring out, and six people lay dead; all over a tree stand. Or an angry motorist reacts not with his horn but his handgun, and a poor driving decision results in a tragic death. Shadows.

A war-torn land; a number of people die in the fighting. But they aren't numbers just to be reported on the evening news. They are people, sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers

and mothers. The bullets flew. The bomb exploded. In one awful instant, their lives were snuffed out. Shadows, deep shadows.

A husband and wife whisper, "I love you, and good-bye," to one another as the husband lies dying and the wife dreads his departure. Shadows, shadows laden with sorrow.

A corporation doesn't know if it can stay financially solvent, unless it takes drastic action. So the lay-off notices go out. Thousands of jobs lost. An entire community devastated. Families struggle to survive. Financial pressures mount; bills to pay, food to put on the table. Then Christmas is around the corner, and we have to find the money to do something for the kids. Someone commits suicide. Shadows, heavy, hard shadows.

Oh, but there's more:

Disputed elections disrupt the latest attempt at democracy.

Riots disturb the tranquility of a major city and an innocent bystander is killed in the violence.

Another youth is murdered in a drive-by shooting.

A wife was battered and abused last night.

A husband came home from work on Friday to find his wife gone, and the

prospect of how to raise his children alone staring him in the face.

Shadows, gathering shadows. There are going to be many times when we walk through shadows -- intense, dark shadows—but we have another reality in which we find hope. It is the reality of Easter coming to us and making all things new.

May this Easter season fill your hearts with peace, restore your joy, and strengthen your trust in the Lord. Let us continue to be people of resurrection hope—sharing grace, extending love, and living as witnesses to the power of new life in Christ.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!

Holy Week Services

Maundy Thursday, April 2, we will celebrate our Lord's Last Supper with Holy Communion and worship in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. We invite you to join us on this most Holy of nights as we prepare ourselves for Easter morning.

Good Friday Community Service, April 3, at 12:30 p.m. we will join our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ as we Carry the Cross to the four congregations in proximity to one another to remember the words that Jesus shared from the cross. A reflection and short devotion will be held at each congregation beginning at St. Paul's UCC and processing in order to Emory UMC, to Immaculate Conception and then to First Lutheran. We invite you to be a witness on this special day.

Easter Service, April 5th at 10:00 a.m., we will praise God for the glorious resurrection of our Lord and celebrate Holy Communion together. Please join us for the EASTER CELEBRATION!

EASTER CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

Join us Easter morning, April 5th at 9:00 a.m. as we celebrate Christ's resurrection in fellowship sharing a continental breakfast during the Sunday School hour. Sunday School will be cancelled for the occasion and we encourage everyone to come and celebrate the special day together.

Pastor Van Deursen will be vacationing in Florida from March 10th – 27th. If there is a pastoral concern, please call him and Pastor Joel Hummel at First Lutheran has agreed to cover any pastoral emergencies. Please call First Lutheran Church to reach him or Pastor Van Deursen and he can give you his personal number.

New Mission Statement for the Keystone Conference

Trusting in God's Grace, the Keystone Conference proclaims the living Gospel of Jesus Christ; embodies the Holy Spirit's transforming Love in the World; and cultivates and strengthens unity across Local Churches, Associations, and the wider church for the flourishing of God's commonwealth.

Several aspects were of key importance: grounding in the triune God, connection with Local Churches and Associations, a focus on love as central to the gospel message, and a vision of openness that would reflect our broad tent reality. The Board felt strongly that "the flourishing of God's commonwealth" was a phrase of inclusivity, welcome, and connection for both humanity and the natural world. Going forward, the Board will work on creating a vision statement alongside a values document, which will work with the Mission Statement to give direction

for the new Conference. In the meantime, we hope that your churches and Associations can see themselves within this Mission Statement and will feel that it reflects some of your reality as we all work for the Glory of God!

In Peace,

‘Carrie

Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, Transitional Executive Conference Minister
Keystone Conference, United Church of Christ

INVITATION

We are working on the church website and invite you to check it out for information and fun happenings at stpaulsuccnewoxford.com Go into what’s happening and you will see pages and go into what’s happening again. We are working on it and will soon have it easily accessible. Hoping to have it as something we all use and are proud of.

Dinner Church

Dinner church continues on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Dinner church will be held Wednesday, March 18th at 6:00 pm. The entrée will be meat loaf. Bring your favorite, side, salad, or dessert or just bring yourself.

Next month’s Dinner church will be on April 15th.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Deciding to share is tough sometimes, especially when we feel we barely have enough to get by ourselves. But compared to people whose lives have been ravaged by disaster, or who live on less than \$1 a day, we have a great abundance.

In March we will be invited to help people in need around the world and in communities impacted by disasters in the U.S. through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. As the church, we are called to help one another, even through the sharing of our own resources.

Giving changes so many things, for the receiver and the giver. Can you imagine the

joy on a mother’s face, who because of your gift, can send her children to school or provide them with a meal before bed? OGHS supports many initiatives that help women start their skill. Programs that through your gift, you become a partner.

By sharing our resources, combined with offerings from thousands of other congregations in eight denominations across the United States, we:

- Build homes, schools, medical clinics, and clean water and sewage facilities in villages devastated by earthquakes, floods, and poverty
- Bring safety, shelter, and food to refugees after often violent circumstances have made their hometowns uninhabitable
- Nurture stronger futures and self-sufficiency through health care, education, job training, and tools for livelihoods.

We are blessed that God is able to provide when and where help is needed through us. When you make your gift, please give generously.

NANCY L’S CORNER

SHUTINS - Please remember them. We must let them know we are thinking of them. Just a phone call, card, or a visit would put a smile on their face.

A Huge Thank You to the exchange students, Joanna and Moo, that have joined our choir.

UNTIL NEXT TIME - THOUGHT TO PONDER – Share a smile with each person you meet and spread cheer –

Author Unknown

Nancy L.

Souper Bowl Sunday

Thank you to all who contributed to this year’s Souper Bowl collection. A total of \$111.00 will be given to New Hope Food Pantry.

Auditing was completed

The auditing committee consisting of Bob Berwager, Linda Meckley, and Sandra Flickinger have audited the church books.

Treasurer's Report

Account Balance as of Jan. 31, 2026

General	\$ -11,166.15
Improvement	\$ 17,547.53
Memorial	\$ 23,534.68
Money Market	\$ 65,000.00
Budgeted Offering	\$ 7,030.25
Actual Offering	\$ 3,865.00

Council Minutes – January

Pastor's Report: Pastor Preston provided a typed report. Pastor Preston requested vacation time March 14 - 28.

Visitor's Comments: The choir anthems have been picked out through the end of May. Scott Fredericks will play February 15th. The 4-H asked permission to use the kitchen.

Old Business

Committee Reports

Visitations - Linda and Barbara were not able to see Linda Novak because of sickness at Hanover Hall.

Ross thanked Barbara for serving on council. We have appreciated her time and insight.

New Business

Election of Officers

President: motion to elect Ross was made.

Vice President: motion to elect Jeff

Secretary: motion to elect Ellen

Treasurer: motion to elect Earl

Committee Appointments

Financial Secretary - Tina Watkins

Property/Maintenance - Doug

Ruhlman

Evangelism/Mission - Tom Stock

Pastoral Relations - Jeff Bankert

Assistant Treasurer - Sarah Ruhlman
Motion to accept all upon their approval, was made

Dinner Church February 18, 2026.
Dinner will be roast beef. We will have an Ash Wednesday service after the dinner.

February

Pastor's Report: Pastor Preston provided a typed report. Pastor Preston asked to extend his March vacation starting March 10 instead of March 13.

Treasurer's Report: No changes.
Motion to approve was made by Ellen, seconded by Jeff. Earl reported that the money that we have in our Money Market account at PNC was not earning the interest that was expected. He recommended moving \$40,000. into a CD at ACNB to earn more money. We would keep \$25,000 in our PNC Money Market account at PNC.

Old Business

Committee Reports

Property/Maintenance - Doug is waiting on a quote for plaster repair and painting. Ross will look for a second quote. Both ping pong tables and the working air hockey was recently sold. Money will go into the general fund.

Visitations - The Pastor's visitations are in his report.

Annual Church Meeting - The meeting will be held February 22nd in the Fellowship Room after the service. A BBQ lunch will be provided. The congregation will be asked to provide sides and desserts.

Red Truck - There has been a pick-up truck parked in the lot. It has not been moved in several weeks. We do not know who owns the truck. Ross will put a note on the truck asking the owner

to move it. Ross will also be contacting Eastern Adam's police about the matter.

Ice Cream Social - The annual Ice Cream Social will be held March 1st at 6:00pm. It will be held in the Social Room.

New Business

Dinner Church will be held February 18. We will be having roast beef. Dinner church in March will be on the 18th.

Cleaning - A motion was made to give Ann a key to the offices so she can clean them.

The next council meeting will be March 9, 2026

Respectfully Submitted,
Ellen Ruhlman, Council Secretary



Prayer List

Alice Jane Baeshore	Ruth Myers
Nevin Baumgardner	Linda Novak
Rev. Dr. Carrie Call	Regina Reinecker
Family of McKnight	Emma Rhinehart and
Guise	family
Jackie Heck	Jeff Rohrbaugh
Laura House	Vicky Waddell
Nicole Hummel	Marcena Walker
The Lorigan Family	Mim Watkins
Brad Maloney	Joann Williams
Jackie & Bill	Julie Wisnieski
Millhimes	

2026 Calendars for Newsletters, Flowers, Bulletins, and Choir

Anthems are posted in the Narthex. If you would like to sponsor any of these for any special date, please sign up. Newsletters are \$35, flowers are \$40, bulletins are \$12, and Choir Anthems are \$25. If you are willing to sponsor any of the above, please notify the secretary about a week ahead if possible with the information for the bulletin or newsletter.

May / June Newsletter

The deadline for the May /June newsletter will be Sunday, April 26th. Please have all information into the church office by then. Thank you



Email Address

If you have an email address and you have not given it to the church, would you please consider sharing it? It would help save postage when communication is necessary. You can email it to the secretary at littlem444@comcast.net or call the church office and leave a message.

March Birthdays

1	Dorrie Miller (York) Mark Mummert
2	Steve Sipe
3	Bentley McClelland
4	Lindsey Rocks
6	Karen Markle, Linda Novak, Marcina Walker
8	Chris Morgret
9	Detra Herrman
13	Michele Deatrick Brenda Hinkle
16	Lanny Mummert Sebastian Stock
18	Randall Sinners
20	Jett McClelland
23	Betty Millhimes
24	Jennifer Kershner
26	Timothy Eckert, Sarah Ruhlman, Kayleigh Weathers
27	Rick Moyer
28	Mary Ellen Berwager

April Birthdays

8	Ronald Platts Freddie Weaver, Kelsey Wood
9	Deb Stock
11	Alexis Dupler
14	Becky Black
17	Kevin Eckert
18	Kayla McClellan, Sue Sensel
20	Courtney Brown
25	Megan Stock
27	Jackie Millhimes

*If anyone's birthday has been missed, please let us know. The office list is not complete. HAPPY BIRTHDAY, EVERYONE!



St. Paul's U.C.C.

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Return Service Requested

March / April Newsletter

