

Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church



900 Country Club Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15228

www.shupchurch.org

10:15 am WORSHIP
November 19, 2023

The 25th Sunday after Pentecost

IN PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

The gospel did not arrive in power but in weakness and humility.

- The Rev. Dr. Willie J. Jennings

The natives went out of their way to be friendly to us. The day was rainy and cold and we were already soaked to the bone, but the Maltese built a huge bonfire and gathered us around it.

- Acts 28:2

ENTERING GOD'S PRESENCE

Prelude

Announcements

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Prayer of Preparation

Call to Worship

Liturgist: Bev Knasko

Leader: Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices!

People: **All praise and thanks to God, who reigns in highest heaven, to Father and to Son and Spirit now be given.**

*Hymn: *We Gather Together*

No. 559

*Call to Confession

Leader: See how Jesus loves us. He died on the cross and rose from the dead for love of the world, for love of each of us sitting here. Let us come before his throne of grace and pray together the prayer of confession.

*Unison Prayer of Confession

Our hearts are not set on you, Jesus our Savior. We have set our hearts on perfectly roasted turkeys, well-played football games, and an extra day off. We have not taken the time to value what is most important – the love and the compassion and the joy that we have in you. We have not thanked you for the love you have created in our lives, the goodness you have created in our beings, and the relationships you have provided for us. Forgive us, we pray, and set our hearts in gratitude upon you.

(Silent Confession)

*Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Beloved in Christ, the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

*Response: *The Gloria*

**Now let our voices raise; Alleluia! Amen!
To give to God our praise; Alleluia! Amen!
Mercy and grace abound! In God our lives are found!
Long may our joy resound; Alleluia! Amen!**

*The Passing of the Peace, American Sign Language

Speaker: Peace be with you.

Respond: And also with you.

Anthem: *Our Grateful Song*

Price & Besig

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Hymn: *Jesus Loves Me!*

No. 304

Children's Story Time

New Testament Reading: Acts: 28:1-31

¹⁻² Once everyone was accounted for and we realized we had all made it, we learned that we were on the island of Malta. The natives went out of their way to be friendly to us. The day was rainy and cold and we were already soaked to the bone, but they built a huge bonfire and gathered us around it.

³⁻⁶ Paul pitched in and helped. He had gathered up a bundle of sticks, but when he put it on the fire, a venomous snake, roused from its sleepiness by the heat, struck his hand and held on. Seeing the snake hanging from Paul's hand like that, the natives jumped to the conclusion that he was a murderer getting what he deserved. Paul shook the snake off into the fire like it was nothing. They kept expecting him to drop dead, but when it was obvious he wasn't going to, they jumped to the conclusion that he was a god!

New Testament Reading: Acts: 28:1-31

⁷⁻⁹ The head man in that part of the island was Publius. He took us into his home as his guests, drying us out and putting us up in fine style for the next three days. Publius's father was sick at the time, down with a high fever and dysentery. Paul went to the old man's room, and when he laid hands on him and prayed, the man was healed. Word of the healing got around fast, and soon everyone on the island who was sick came and got healed.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ We spent a wonderful three months on Malta. They treated us royally, took care of all our needs and outfitted us for the rest of the journey. When an Egyptian ship that had wintered there in the harbor prepared to leave for Italy, we got on board. The ship had a carved Gemini for its figurehead: "the Heavenly Twins."

¹²⁻¹⁴ We put in at Syracuse for three days and then went up the coast to Rhegium. Two days later, with the wind out of the south, we sailed into the Bay of Naples. We found Christian friends there and stayed with them for a week.

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ And then we came to Rome. Friends in Rome heard we were on the way and came out to meet us. One group got as far as Appian Court; another group met us at Three Taverns—emotion-packed meetings, as you can well imagine. Paul, brimming over with praise, led us in prayers of thanksgiving. When we actually entered Rome, they let Paul live in his own private quarters with a soldier who had been assigned to guard him.

¹⁷⁻²⁰ Three days later, Paul called the Jewish leaders together for a meeting at his house. He said, "The Jews in Jerusalem arrested me on trumped-up charges, and I was taken into custody by the Romans. I assure you that I did absolutely nothing against Jewish laws or Jewish customs. After the Romans investigated the charges and found there was nothing to them, they wanted to set me free, but the Jews objected so fiercely that I was forced to appeal to Caesar. I did this not to accuse them of any wrongdoing or to get our people in trouble with Rome. We've had enough trouble through the years that way. I did it *for* Israel. I asked you to come and listen to me today to make it clear that I'm on Israel's side, not against her. I'm a hostage here for hope, not doom."

²¹⁻²² They said, "Nobody wrote warning us about you. And no one has shown up saying anything bad about you. But we would like very much to hear more. The only thing we know about this Christian sect is that nobody seems to have anything good to say about it."

New Testament Reading: Acts: 28:1-31

²³ They agreed on a time. When the day arrived, they came back to his home with a number of their friends. Paul talked to them all day, from morning to evening, explaining everything involved in the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them all about Jesus by pointing out what Moses and the prophets had written about him.

²⁴⁻²⁷ Some of them were persuaded by what he said, but others refused to believe a word of it. When the unbelievers got cantankerous and started bickering with each other, Paul interrupted: “I have just one more thing to say to you. The Holy Spirit sure knew what he was talking about when he addressed our ancestors through Isaiah the prophet:

Go to this people and tell them this:

“You’re going to listen with your ears,

but you won’t hear a word;

You’re going to stare with your eyes,

but you won’t see a thing.

These people are blockheads!

They stick their fingers in their ears

so they won’t have to listen;

They screw their eyes shut

so they won’t have to look,

so they won’t have to deal with me face-to-face

and let me heal them.”

²⁸ “You’ve had your chance. The non-Jewish outsiders are next on the list. And believe me, they’re going to receive it with open arms!”

³⁰⁻³¹ Paul lived for two years in his rented house. He welcomed everyone who came to visit. He urgently presented all matters of the kingdom of God. He explained everything about Jesus Christ. His door was always open.

Leader: The Word of the Lord!

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Laura Strauss

Special Music: *Give Thanks* (Dave Petty)

H. Smith

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Affirmation of Faith: The Second Helvetic Confession, from the Swiss Reformers in
1561, 5.074

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his same flesh, ascended above all visible heavens into the highest heaven, that is, the dwelling-place of God and the blessed ones, at the right hand of God the Father. Although it signifies an equal participation in glory and majesty, it is also taken to be a certain place about which the Lord, speaking in the Gospel, says: I go to prepare a place for you. The apostle Peter also says: Heaven must receive Christ until the time of restoring things.

Minute for Mission: *Stewardship Campaign*

Joys, Concerns, & Testimonies

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Presenting Gifts, Tithes and Offerings

Prayer of Dedication

*Response: *Give Thanks*

**Give thanks with a grateful heart.
Give thanks to the Holy One.
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son. (Repeat)
And now, let the weak say I am strong;
Let the poor say I am rich,
Because of what the Lord has done for me. (Repeat)
Give thanks, give thanks.**

CCLI #1065469

DEPARTING TO SERVE

Hymn: *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*

No. 551

*Benediction

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you: may he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm: may he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you: may he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

*Response

*Postlude

**If you are able to do so, please stand.*

Happy Birthday to Darlene Farabaugh (23rd)!

The Chancel Flowers were given today by Kay Walker in memory of Paul Walker.

The Flower Delivery will be made by Mike Duffner & Dottie Fleming.

Our Greeters today were Mike Duffner & Dottie Fleming.

Deacon Food Drive Donations for November: Soup & Canned Vegetables

Special Items Needed for Refugees & Immigrants: Dried Beans, Lentils, Rice, Flour, Cooking Oil, Sugar, Spices (Salt, Pepper, Garlic Powder, Chili Powder, Turmeric) & Disposable Diapers

Hospital visits by Pastor Laura can be scheduled through the church office. If you or someone you know is having surgery or is in the hospital, please let us know so that Pastor Laura can be there to visit and pray with you and your loved ones.

PRAYER LIST

Prayer Circle – Jeffrey Fitzwilliam & John Fitzwilliam

November – The family of Scott Turko (husband of Jennifer Turko, SH Nursery School teacher), Nick (student of Ryan Gracey's), Walt (Carole McCullough's brother-in-law), Shane Smith (Amy Riley's nephew), family of Bob McGregor (husband of Donna McGregor, a Monday Bible Study attendee), The family of Judy & Jim Ross (David Greenfield's sister and brother-in-law)

October – The family of Robert Shetler, Ann (Chip McCoy's sister), The family of Bob Kitchen (Jill Fako's uncle), Patience Bergfelt, Lilly (friend of Kara Yates), those affected by the war in the Middle East

Ongoing - Nancy Brumfield, Eneless Frank, Mya Kelly, Joanna, Becca, our Mission Co-Workers: Rev. Mark Adams & Miriam Maldonado Escobar and their children; Cindy Anna Flor & Nathan who serve at the U.S.-Mexico Border, our sister church, Litchenza CCAP in Malawi, Africa, Pabatso Makhalanyane, Healthcare and all Essential Workers, Jon Weaver (Sarajane's friend), all those who continue to be affected by the fires, storms, hurricanes, excessive heat waves and other natural disasters



WELCOME TO SUNSET HILLS UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!

CONNECT with us!

Phone: 412-561-6261

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Address: 900 Country Club Dr. Pgh, PA 15228

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Laura E. Strauss

Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. William Gracey

Website: www.shupchurch.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/shupchurch/>

CHURCH CALENDAR

Sun, Nov 19

9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
10:15 am Worship - Sanctuary
10:45 am Children's Church
11:30 am Mission Meeting – Cort Room
5:00 pm AA Meeting – Findley Hall

Mon, Nov 20

1:00 pm Findley Hall Bible Study
3:30 pm Troop #16212 – Crystal Hall
6:00 pm Troop #46920 Meeting – Room 113

Tues, Nov 21

1:00 pm Wilson Hall Bible Study
4:30 pm Odyssey of the Mind – Room 113
6:30 pm Campanile Bells Practice – Choir Room
7:00 pm Square Dance Class – Crystal Hall
7:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice – Choir Room

Wed, Nov 22 – Office & Nursery School Closed

9:15 am Yoga – Crystal Hall
6:30 pm Tai Chi – Crystal Hall

Thurs, Nov 23 – Office & Nursery School Closed

Happy Thanksgiving!

Fri, Nov 24 – Office & Nursery School Closed

5:00 pm AA Meeting – Findley Hall

Sun, Nov 26

9:00 am Adult Sunday School - Library
10:15 am Worship – Sanctuary
10:45 am Children's Church
11:30 am Hanging of the Greens
5:00 pm AA Meeting – Findley Hall

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ❖ **Office Closed:** The office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday this Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.
- ❖ **Nursery School Closed:** The Nursery School will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday Wednesday through next Monday, December 4th.
- ❖ **Men's Coat Drive:** The Mission Commission is collecting gently used men's coats to donate to the Jubilee Kitchen. If you would like to donate a new or gently used men's coat, you can put them in the closet outside of Findley Hall across from the restrooms.
- ❖ **Hanging of the Greens:** Everyone is invited to join the Deacons after the worship service next Sunday to help decorate the church for the upcoming Season of Advent.
- ❖ **Deacon Bake Sale Donations:** The Deacons will be accepting donations of your cookie and other holiday baked goods for their sale on Saturday, December 9th. If you would like to donate some items, please drop them off on Friday, December 8th between 6 – 8 pm in the kitchen or on Saturday, December 9th starting at 9 am. Please package all cookies individually (2-4 per bag) and be sure to mark if they contain peanuts, tree nuts, etc.
- ❖ **Deacon Bake Sale:** The Deacons will hold their annual cookie sale on Saturday, December 9th starting at 10:00 am in Findley Hall.
- ❖ **Parents' Night Out:** Children ages 3-9 are invited to join us here at the church on Friday, December 15th from 6 pm – 9pm for some crafts, snack, fun, & a movie while their parents take the night to get things done or just take the night off! To reserve your space, contact Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com. Donations will be accepted.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (CONT.)

- ❖ **Christmas Dinner:** Everyone is invited to join us for a Christmas dinner on Sunday, December 17th. Congregational Care will provide the main dish. Invitations were mailed last week. Please be sure to return your RSVP to let us know that you will be there and what side/dessert you will be bringing.
- ❖ **Christmas Stockings:** During the month of December, we will be collecting small travel-sized toiletry items (deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, etc) that will be sent to Familylinks, an organization in the South Hills that services youth, adults, and seniors. During Advent, stockings will be hung on the ends of the pews down the center aisle. Please place your donations into the stocking when you come for worship. Thank you for participating in the mission.
- ❖ **Stewardship Campaign:** The Stewardship campaign letters were mailed out in late October. Please remember to return your pledge card to the church office either. You can send the insert that was included with the letter or, you can go online to [Online Stewardship Pledge | Mysite \(shupchurch.org\)](https://shupchurch.org) to fill one out online. Please remember, your pledge card is important so that we can plan the SHUP budget for 2024. Thank you.

Get Your Littles in their PJ's for

Parent's Night Out

Children ages three through nine are invited to the church for a night out so their parents can shop, wrap, or even nap! While parents have their "grown-up" time, kids will enjoy dinner, activities, and a movie.

Friday, December 15th

6 – 9 pm

Sunset Hills United Presbyterian Church

To Register:

- Visit [Parents Night Out | Mysite \(shupchurch.org\)](https://shupchurch.org) to fill out the online registration form or to download the registration form (physical form can be returned to the Nursery School or the Church Office).
- Email Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com.

There is no fee for the event.

Freewill donations will be accepted at the door.

Register by December 8th.



Volunteers Needed!

If you are able to help us with *Parents' Night Out*, please contact Pastor Laura at revlaurastrauss@gmail.com.

BREAD FOR THE WORLD THANKSGIVING PRAYER SERVICE FOR A FAIR FARM BILL

**NOVEMBER 19, 2:00 P.M.
WARREN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
2606 CENTRE AVENUE, PITTSBURGH**

Join Christian leaders for a prayer event bringing together believers of all denominations for a special afternoon of thanksgiving and action to combat poverty and food insecurity.



For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land...a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills. When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.

Deut. 8:7-10

Co-sponsors as of November 2 include:
Association of Pittsburgh Priests, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, Foundation of Hope, Just Harvest, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Rainbow Kitchen, and the Western PA Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

