

Greetings & Happy New Year from First UCC!
We pray that God's blessings continue to fill your home and touch your life!

**We are now gathering together, in person, for worship at the Church
Every Sunday at our usual 10:00 a.m. time!**

Naturally, we will be following proper distancing & safety protocols
but it is a beautiful blessing to gather as a Church Family again!



While we are open, we do plan to CONTINUE to offer a video Worship services for those who are unable or uncomfortable attending 'in person' worship, or for anyone who would like to join us via the internet!

Rev. Mike would like to share this Sunday's Gospel message of hope with you. Even in the midst of this world-wide health emergency, Jesus love is still with us.

**You may view the video of Rev. Mike sharing this Sunday's message
by clicking this link...**

[JANUARY 17th, 2021 "Fireside" Worship Video](#)

Please use this 'mini-bulletin' to follow along with the service, reading responses along with Kathleen in the video. Our 'mini-bulletin' also includes other information & announcements to keep you informed. Please feel free to share the bulletin & the video with others.



*Thanks to Kathleen Dowd for serving as the Sound Engineer &
as the "People" for our Responsive Readings.*

*Thanks, as always, to our Music Director, Sheila Cooke for recording our worship music each week.
Thanks to Paul Ricciardi at Golden Pepper Productions, Inc. for setting our video up for us each week.
Thanks to Gabby & Cliff at Cliff Ross Advertising & Design for assisting us with our Facebook postings.*



~ First United Church of Christ ~

229 Church St. • Easton • Pennsylvania 18042

Rev. J. Michael Dowd, Pastor ~ Sheila Cooke, Music Director

Telephone: 610-258-3361 ~ Email: firstucc2@verizon.net

website: www.firstucceaston.org ~ Facebook (First UCC Easton)

~ Sunday, January 17th, 2021 ~

~ The Second Sunday After Epiphany ~



OPENING HYMN: ~ "When Morning Gilds the Sky"

CALL TO WORSHIP: (please read responsively: L= Leader, All: Everyone)

L: Arise, people of God! The light has come; it shines around us, within us, and without us.

P: **In the gloom of winter we seek out the light of Christ; we yearn for God's radiance and warmth.**

L: Gather, people of God! Come to encounter the Holy Mystery of God-with-us.

P: As the wise men journeyed from afar, so have we come to pay homage to the Christ child.

L: Give thanks, people of God! Let us be servants of the gospel, sharers in the promise of Christ.

P: Through Christ, we have access to God; let us be bold in our worship!

CALL TO CONFESSION:

L: The psalmist reminds us, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever." With this knowledge, we may confess our sins before God and one another with confidence.

CONFESSION OF SIN: (Spoken together, in Unison)

All: Eternal God, you have revealed your love by the light of your Christ and taught your faithful people by the light of your Spirit. Enlighten our hearts and minds that we may give up our attachment to the darkness of sin and evil. Outside these walls, we are constantly tempted to choose darkness rather than light: to use people, to love things, to gamble, to dabble in the occult world of psychics and astrologers, to do whatever it takes to get whatever we want. We confess we have not put up much of a fight against temptation, nor sought your ever-present support to defeat those particular demons which appeal to us. Like a fungus that cannot survive rays of sunlight, so our sin cannot withstand the beams of your love.

Shine in the dark caverns of our hearts, where we hide our secret thoughts and desires. Make us radiant with your love, that others may see our good works and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

L: Friends, hear this good news. Jesus Christ is our ark! His power is unequalled, his grace is unrestrained, his strength is steadfast, and his embrace is sufficient to carry all that we are and hope to be. Friends, believe the good news! In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

GLORIA PATRI: (Spoken together, in Unison)

**Glory be to the Father, and
To the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be;
World with out end. Amen**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Spoken together, in Unison)

All: Lord, you have given us your Word for a light to shine upon our path; grant us so to meditate on that Word, and to follow its teaching, that we may find in it the light that shines more and more until the perfect day; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Saint Jerome, 342-420.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 17th is: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NIV)

3 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 17th is: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (NIV)

¹² "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."^[a] ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.^[b]

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 17th is: John 1:43-51 (NIV)

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

⁵⁰ Jesus said, “You believe^[a] because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” ⁵¹ He then added, “Very truly I tell you,^[b] you^[c] will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’^[d] the Son of Man.

MEDITATION ~ “An Important Town with a Poor Reputation”

According to the BBC News, inhabitants of a village in northern Nigeria are celebrating the renaming of their village. The old name of the town was “Area of Idiots.” Wonder why they wanted to change it? The new name of the village is “Area of Plenty.” I believe you will agree that’s an improvement.

The predicament of that village caused me to research some unfortunate names of towns here in the United States. What if we lived in Nothing, Arizona? Or Nowhere, Colorado? Or Hell for Certain, Kentucky? Now, that’s descriptive! Or Satan’s Kingdom, Massachusetts? Or Boogertown, North Carolina? Or Knockemstiff, Ohio?

By the way, the name Knockemstiff doesn’t refer to fighting, I understand, but is thought to be a reference to the strength of the local moonshine. Knockemstiff.

That, of course, brings us to our scripture for today. I know some of you are thinking, “How could that possibly bring us to any scripture?” Well, here we go!

In our lesson for today, a man named Philip has just encountered Christ and has been won over him. He, in turn, reaches out to a friend, Nathanael, and tells him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

“Nazareth!” Nathanael asked. “Can anything good come from there?”

Obviously, Nathanael wasn’t very impressed with Nazareth. While it doesn’t have an embarrassing name like Boogertown, there was obviously nothing impressive about Nazareth. And yet, Nazareth was chosen by God as the village where God’s own Son would spend his childhood and youth. It’s so like God, isn’t it, to take an unimpressive village and unimpressive people and do extraordinary things through them?

Nazareth deserved its poor reputation. Remember when Jesus preached his first sermon there? You’ll find the story in Luke 4. It was right after Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness. Luke tells us that Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

But then he returned to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the

prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. Says Luke, “The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him.” He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Well, the townsfolk were impressed. All spoke well of him, Luke tells us, and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

Then Jesus’ message took a twist—a twist that riled up his listeners. Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

We’re not certain why Christ spoke in such a negative way to his hometown audience. I suspect there was some background to this dialogue of which we are not aware. Maybe there were some questions during his childhood about his unconventional birth. Maybe he was bullied growing up in Nazareth. After all, a boy who turns the other cheek would be considered weak in most ancient cultures.

Anyway, the result of all this was that all the people in the synagogue were furious at what he had to say. They drove him out of the town and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built to throw him off a cliff.

Now there are probably a lot of churches that have been tempted to throw their pastor off a cliff, but fortunately I’ve never heard of it happening. And, fortunately, it didn’t happen here. Luke tells us, “But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.”

Luke didn’t include details to explain why this confrontation occurred, but it’s hard to feel sorry for Nazareth. There were obviously some hotheads there. Throwing a person from a cliff over an unpopular sermon is a little extreme. Still, there must have been some positive things about Nazareth.

The late author Tom Wolfe is famous for his observation, “You can’t go home” by which he meant you can’t truly go back to a place you once lived because so much will have changed since you left that it is not the same place anymore. Undoubtedly that’s true, but some of us may have no desire to go back home to some of the places we have lived for unspecified reasons. Maybe we never really felt accepted or appreciated.

We don’t know why Jesus was so harsh with the people of Nazareth, but the fact that they were ready to throw him from a cliff indicates that he hit a nerve somewhere.

We must say: even Jesus didn’t please everyone. If you think you can sail through life with no one criticizing you, no opposition, no one making catty remarks about you, you are going to have a disappointing life.

There is a very sad story about an aspiring dancer whose sole dream was to dance on Broadway. She practiced for hours upon hours, hoping that someday she would grace the stage. One day, though, some of her friends got together and discouraged her so badly about her dancing that not only did she give up dancing, but she also decided to commit suicide.

She went to the Golden Gate Bridge. Before she jumped off, she wrote a suicide note that began with the words, "They said . . ." After writing the note, she jumped to her death. When the police got there all they found was a note that read, "They said . . ."

The morning headline for the San Francisco Chronicle read "Young aspiring dancer jumps to her death; cause unknown, but something *they said* made her do it."

"They said . . ." Possibly her friends thought they were doing her a favor by discouraging her dream. Perhaps in their estimation, she would never make the grade. She might as well give up before she wasted any more of her life. Maybe their words were meant as a kind of intervention.

But who knows? Maybe she would have had a very satisfying life living in a small New York City apartment and picking up a part in an occasional minor production. Be careful when you step on somebody else's dream.

"They said . . ." Even Jesus had his critics. Remember his own mother and brothers were concerned that he was going off the deep end with his teaching. It is quite probable that, as people in his town learned some of his views as a young adult, he faced a great deal of criticism. It's important for us to see that even Jesus couldn't please everyone.

The important thing is that he stayed true to his values. Do you think everyone in town agreed with him when he said to turn the other cheek? Do you think that people liked it when he used Samaritans—the very people his neighbors despised most—as heroes in some of his teachings? Do you really think that racial and religious bigotry are a new phenomenon? And his teachings on wealth? Do you think the upper middle-class people liked hearing that the rich man ended up in Hades and the poor beggar Lazarus ended up in heaven? After all, the only goal that some of his neighbors had was to climb the social and economic ladder.

But Jesus stayed true to his values—even when people got upset. Even when they threatened to throw him off a cliff. Even when they threatened to nail him to a tree.

Now you expect that of Jesus, don't you? You expect him to stay true to his values. Do you expect it out of yourself? That's the real question of the morning.

There is classic story told of a Baptist church that was seeking to hire a new pastor. In Baptist churches a search committee visits several churches to listen to prospective pastors preach, and then invites the pastor that best meets their needs to come and preach for the whole congregation. After the congregation meets with him or her, they take a vote on whether to hire the person that the search committee has selected.

This church invited a pastor so chosen to come preach for them. Afterward they voted and informed the pastor he was hired. Later, one of the deacons said to the new pastor the vote was "almost unanimous." This alarmed the pastor, so he asked, "What was the vote?" The deacon said the vote was 230 yes and 2 votes no.

Well, this so disturbed the new pastor that he spent the first six months trying to find out who the two no votes were. When he found out who the two were, he spent the next six months trying to please those two people. At the end of the year the church voted again and fired the

pastor. This time the vote was 230 to fire him and 2 votes to keep him. You want to guess who voted to keep him? That's right—the two people he sought so hard to please—which highly displeased the rest of the congregation.

You see that pastor wasn't called to make those 2 people happy. He was called to minister to everyone in that entire congregation. He needed to stay true to his values and treat the two dissenters like he treated everyone else. Then his ministry would have been more productive.

Jesus stayed true to his values. He was sent by the Father to demonstrate a new way of living which he termed the Kingdom of God. His goal was to plant that kingdom in every heart. And he never wandered from that path. And because he did stay true, today one-third of the people on this planet call him Lord.

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.

"Come and see," said Philip.

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit."

That's interesting, don't you think? Jesus realizes that Nathanael is a person who is also true to his values. He's a quality young man. Jesus always appreciates people of character, people of integrity.

"How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Then Nathanael takes a step that goes even beyond integrity. He finds a purpose. He declares, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

And Nathanael becomes a follower of Jesus. He discovered who Jesus really was and he wanted to follow him. Jesus already knew everything about Nathanael. Just as Jesus knows everything about you, my friend. You may not have it all together as Nathanael did—except for his prejudice against people from Nazareth. Still, Christ wants to have a relationship with you and me.

Are you willing to take that step? It makes no difference where you come from—even if it's Hell for Certain, KY. It doesn't even matter what you've done with your life up to this point—even if you've been terribly prejudiced toward residents of Boogertown, North Carolina. It's not too late for us to change. He wants an eternal relationship with us. All we have to do is say, Yes, I want to follow Jesus.



AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: (please read together in unison)

**All: We believe these "foolish" mysteries of God's kingdom:
that those who want to save their life will lose it,
and those who lose their life for Christ's sake will save it;
that some are last who will be first,
and some are first who will be last;
that we should love our enemies**

**and pray for those who persecute us;
that Christ's power is made perfect in our weakness.
We believe that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.
We believe and proclaim Christ crucified,
a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others,
but to those who believe, the power and wisdom of God.
We believe that God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom,
and that God's weakness is stronger than human strength.**

—Based in part on 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

PASTORAL PRAYER:

L: Lord God, we give you thanks for all your gifts to us — for daily food, for health, for each breath we take, for freedom to choose, and for the gifts of your word, your power and your love. Our hearts are truly overwhelmed, O God, when we consider how you have entrusted so much to us. May we be worthy of that trust. May we be a people who are unafraid to live as fully and as richly as you want us to live.

Help us, O God, as followers of Jesus, to multiply all that you have given us, to risk spreading your word and perhaps see it misunderstood, to gamble by loving those whom others think worthy only of hate, to take chances by doing good to those who have not done good to us. Help us be faith-filled and desire to increase your glory and your goodness in this world. Make us people who share in both word and deed that which you have given to us.

We pray for the church gathered today, both here and around the world, that it may encourage all of its members to discover, develop and use all their gifts, those of nature and those of grace.

We pray for those who are poor in body or in spirit, for those oppressed and heavy laden, for those sick or in despair, especially for the victims of Covid, Collette, Tim and Gregg, Doris, Bob and Barbara, Rosalie, David Freytag, Karen B, Tom B., Tom Bauer, Marjorie Harron, Helen Litzenger, Evelyn Ritter, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, and Naomi. Minister by your Spirit and by us, to all those for whom we have prayed, and help us walk faithfully in the path of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LORD'S PRAYER: (Please read together in Unison)

**All: 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,
The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Please read together in Unison)

All: Bountiful God, we come with our offerings in response to your love. With the new life in Christ, we give ourselves in service to others. With the energy bestowed by the Spirit, we seek to inflame all your people with a zeal for your way. Receive the work we do, and the gifts we bring, that they may become a blessing in your sight.

* **DOXOLOGY** (SPOKEN in Unison)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

BENEDICTION:

L: We are called to be witnesses to God's glory. God urges us, encourages us, pleads with us to take this call seriously — to live a life worthy of God. Jesus is our Model and Ideal, and also our Savior and Hope. When we fall short, it is the Spirit who supplies all our needs. Go from this place, committed to be witnesses to God, disciples of Christ and a community of the Spirit, through the power of the triune God. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: "Be Now My Vision"



As we navigate our way through this difficult and unpredictable time please share your personal, family and neighbor prayer requests. You can send them by email for our church office: firstucc2@verizon.net or you may call the office & leave a message. Also please share our First UCC Worship program & video with your friends and family.



Announcements for Sunday, Jan. 17th, 2021 ~

No matter who you are, or where you are on your life's journey, you're welcome here. Join us in celebrating First UCC's respect for the past and faith in the future.



PLEASE NOTE: Hospitals no longer notify the church or the pastor unless you SPECIFICALLY REQUEST IT. So please, if you or a family member is hospitalized, let us know by calling the office at 610-258-3361! Please see our prayer list below.



OR by calling or texting Rev. Mike directly on his cell phone at 610-216-5471.



IMPORTANT FIRST CHURCH NOTES...

Rev. Dowd & our First Church leadership will continue to monitor the ongoing Corona virus situation. We will be especially mindful of the most vulnerable members of our First Church Family & make decisions accordingly.

Please keep watching your **e-mail**, our **website** at www.firstucceaston.org, or our **Facebook** page at <https://www.facebook.com/FirstUCCEaston> or call our **Church Office at 610-258-3361** for updates & information.



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY! We will continue to meet on an ongoing basis to discuss how things are working. We will share information on these decisions as they are made. **HOWEVER, we do plan to CONTINUE to offer a video Worship service for those who are unable or uncomfortable attending 'in person' worship or for anyone who would like to join us via the internet!**



Today's Bulletins are sponsored by **Bill Arnold**, in memory of his loved ones.



We will still be collecting warm hats, scarves, glove, mittens & socks to be distributed to those who need them so, bring some in & hang them on our "Angel Tree"!



OUR "SUNSHINE FUND" IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW, with many people being out of work. Our "Sunshine Fund" helps members of our church who may need some assistance due to this health emergency.

A REMINDER – If you are experiencing an emergency need, please contact the Church Office or Rev. Mike directly. All requests will be kept confidential.



THIS PAST FRI., JAN. 15th WAS the DEADLINE for our FEB. STEEPLE NEWS!!! Please get any info to be shared with our Church Family, into the office ASAP!



TOMORROW, MON., JAN. 18th We will "UN-DECORATE" the Church starting at 9 a.m. So, if you are free, please come & lend a hand!



IT IS ALSO the observance of Rev., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday & our "National Day of Service" so please do some good deeds!

Like helping take down our Christmas decorations!?!



TUES., JAN. 19th has been proclaimed a National Day of Unity & Remembrance of those nearly 400,000 Americans who have passed from covid. There will be special lighting ceremonies & bell ringings throughout the nation at 5:30 p.m.



2021 OFFERING ENVELOPES are now available. Please pick yours up from the table in Memorial Hall. If you do not have envelopes but would like a set, please see Bob Arnold or Rich Phifer.



Rev. Mike is hosting a Virtual WED. EVENING BIBLE STUDY via Zoom, live at 7:00 p.m.! (NOT 7:30) can join in on the computer or on the PHONE!!! This virtual, live, group Bible Study runs from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what topics come into the conversation. You can join in on line or, you can CALL IN & be a part of the group on the phone! Please e-mail Rev. Mike or the Church Office (firstucc2@verizon.net) if you are interested, he will send you the link/info to join.





RUMMAGE UPDATE!!! PLEASE NOTE... We are **NOT** able to accept any more Rummage at this time!



FIRST CHURCH FAMILY NEWS! ...



As we continue in this “state of limbo”, we would like to make note of some of the events in the lives of our First Church Family. IF YOU have family news to share, especially if we missed it, please e-mail or call the office to let us know & we will post it in our next “Mini-Bulletin”. *[Please note: Apologies for missing events that would normally have been shared in our monthly “Steeple News”.]*



KEEP IN PRAYER... Please keep Cara S., Elwood (Woody) & Brenda Z., Sue & Bruce D., Marcella D., Bob H., Kelly C & Family, Doris S., Jamie H., Bob & Barbara V., Rosalie, Sue Carpenter, David Freytag, Don Mills, Jr., Collette Andreadis, Wendy Wandersee, Jeanette Orso, Sal Giamoni, Danny K, Bonnie David, Janet Kobler’s cousin Karen B, Moe & Keith Berger. We keep Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter, Nomie P. & Helen Litzenberger, in our prayers as well as the family of Gregg D., the family of Janice D., the family of Joe K., the family of Tim O’Neill, the Dzikowski children & family members, & all those who grieve.



Lord, we pray for our Nation, for peace, unity & healing of the fractures in our country.

As we celebrate the hope of this new year, Lord, please bless us all in the coming year!



A Reminder... While we have reopened, many are not able to join us yet. Even through this, our church expenses (gas bill, electric bill, etc.) must still be paid each month. With this in mind, we ask that you continue to contribute during this crisis. You can...



- **MAIL your contributions** to the church at 229 Church Street, Easton, PA 18042.
- **DROP your envelope through the MAIL SLOT in the Church St. door of the SCHOOLHOUSE** (formerly the Office). Please make sure your name or envelop number is on it.
- **Online Giving**, which allows you to make your contributions online from either your bank checking or bank savings account. If you are interested in this online option, please contact Rich Phifer at 610-217-9244 or email Rich at raphifer@rcn.com to get further information about this payment option.



Steeple Restoration ~
Check our all of our Steeple Project Videos on our website or our NEW YouTube Channel!!!

We have set up a YouTube channel for the church to post videos of our Restoration progress. You can find our YouTube channel by searchingFirst United Church of Christ Easton PA, then click on the steeple logo!



First Church Prayer Requests ~

Prayer is a powerful thing! God invites us to pray with words of praise, thanksgiving & petitions for others & for ourselves. We gladly receive & share prayer concerns so that we may 'Bear one another's burdens' (Galatians 6:2) and 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.' (Romans 12:15).



IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF EMERGENCY PASTORAL CARE, please call our church office at 610-258-3361 or Rev. Mike at 610-216-5471.

We all ask for Your blessing, Lord, on all of those who are essential employees & remain in high risk positions, unable to isolate, in order to serve & protect us during this national health emergency & their families. Father bless those in Health Care, First Responders, those who care for others, all those who wait on us in stores, restaurants, those who drive us on public transit & take care of us at other places that we frequent, all those who will be cleaning public places & all those around us who must deal with the public in other ways. Including those in our own families & church family who are 'essential' in their work places (**David S., David W., Helen C., Jill W., Keith B., Keith C., Mark C., Ross F.**) We pray for those who reside in group facilities (nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, group homes, etc.) we pray for Your protection over them Father.

We pray for Your healing for all those afflicted with this Corona virus or who may be ~ **Beth** (Linda W. relative, ~ we pray that Your healing love will wash over them, strengthen them & bring them to full & complete recovery.

Lord, we pray for our **hospitalized Veterans and the dedicated staff that care for them and we pray for the souls of our Veterans and staff who Shave lost their battle with COVID.**

Father, we lift up those who struggle with mental & emotional health & substance abuse issues, seen & unseen. For many, the amplified uncertainty of what is happening, fear, income/job loss, family stress, loss of support contacts, etc., is more than they can bear. Lord, speak Your Peace into the spirits of those who are gripped by these struggles that may be spiraling out of control. Help them to see You at the center of their storm & let them know You will be their strength.

Lord, we pray for Your wisdom for those who are making decisions about how to keep us all safer. **Help us all to remain calm but cautious.**

We pray for those whose incomes will be affected due to closures, cancelations & cautions. This is a MAJOR problem for many. Help us to help each other through this time. Bless those who we are in debt to, (utility companies, credit card companies, loan holders, medical facilities, insurance companies, etc.) with understanding & compassion. We pray that we will be kind, compassionate & considerate with each other. Help us to see need in our neighbors & in our own families & help us to reach out, to share & to shine the light of hope on those around us.

Lord, we pray for the people of California & the western United States who are engulfed in wild fires & smoke. Give them peace & strength. We pray for You to watch over all the smoke jumpers, firefighters, rescue workers, shelter workers, volunteers & neighbors as they all try to help each other.

Lord, we pray for the people of Beirut, for the families of those who were lost, for those who are injured, for the thousands of people who are now homeless in that already hurting land. Help the rest of us to see a way to help them.

Please keep these folks in your prayers... We pray for healing for Barbara V., Bob G., Bob H., Bob L., Bruce & Sue D., Cara S., Chris, Colette A., Danny K., David F., Debbie S. & Family, Deacon Anthony Koury, Doris S., Elwood (Woody) & Brenda Z., Evelyn R., Fawn B., Ferne, George S., Helena, James R., Jamie H., Jeanette O. & Family, Jill R., Joe R., Kelly C. & Family, Kim Kelty, Lila, Marcella D., Marilyn Crozier Snuggs, Marjorie H., Mark, Marlene M., Michael R., Nancy M., Nancy & Ken A., Naomi, Nicole A., Ray U., Rosalie, Ruth F., "Sal: G., Stewart W., Wendy W. We pray for all those affected by the recent

storms, fires & other natural disasters, and now disease & civil unrest, Lord, protect them, keep them strong & help them to recover their lives.

We pray for Ashley, Barbara, Bonnie, Brittany, Claritza, Davonna, Davon, Dawn, Delila, Katie, Kimberly, Skyler, Susan, Charlene, Amy, Jailien, Jessica, Rose, Twanda, Wendy, Nancy, Natasha & all officers & prisoners at NC Prison.

ALSO, we lift up the family of Gregg D., the family of Janice D., the family of Joe K., the family of Tim O'Neill, the Dzikowski children & family members, the Flexer/Arnold Family, the Galante/Rapp Families, the Amore/Smith Families, the Ashton Family, the family of Naomi Schleicher, the family of Joshua Fulmer, and the family of Megan McGinley & All whose broken hearts endlessly grieve. LORD, send Your sweet, tender & restorative love to cover them & heal those hearts.

Jesus, we pray for our Nation, that we can come together for each other, for this whole world Lord.

We pray for You to watch over parents & families & all of our young people. Especially now, while schools are closed. Lord keep Your hand on them & guide their choices & decisions. Help families to meet the extra needs they have during this time.

Lord, again we see more cases of severe racial inequality in our nation & the anger of a community that has had enough. We lift up ALL victims of hatred, violence, abuse & their families & all people of faith as we pray for healing for them all, for our nation & an end to hate. We pray for peaceful but meaningful protests that are heard by the heart of this nation. We pray for a leader to step forward from that community, a person of character, peace & strength, to end the violent protests & to channel the anger into meaningful action & change rather than destruction.

Lord, we pray for healing of these communities around our nation that have been ravaged as protests morphed into riots, looting & violence. Lord, speak to the hearts of those perpetrators & show them that, that is not the way. We pray for those were injured or killed, for whose businesses, homes & possessions were destroyed. We pray that those responsible will step forward to bring restitution & restoration.

We thank you & pray for those who protest in peace, who seek justice & peace. We thank you & pray for the police & other law enforcement agents who act with restraint & compassion and we pray for those who don't.

We lift up all of our military and all of our first responders, LORD, we ask for your protection over them all as they serve us all. We pray for protection for members of our government who have become targets of hate

We pray that You will give our leaders the courage & compassion to make changes that will begin to heal our nation after this week's shameful & terrible assault on our Capitol & our very democracy.

We pray for our very planet. It seems to be groaning with earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, germs & all sorts of natural responses to our treatment of our host planet, our home here in the Universe. Lord help us to find better ways to live so we do not endanger ALL life that shares this planet with us.

Jesus, thank You for coming to save us! Without You, we would all be lost. AMEN.



**Unfortunately, we are seeing covid infections, hospitalizations
& deaths rising more & more.**

We all need to continue to be “Corona Warriors”.

WE ALL HAVE A PART TO PLAY!

We need to protect our loved ones, ourselves & those around us!

**We need to allow our health care workers & systems to conserve supplies & keep
hospital beds open.**

**We need to do our part to have mercy on those
whose job it is to care for the sick.**



- **IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME & CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR.**
- **We should still LIMIT CONTACT IN PUBLIC PLACES, WEAR MASKS & WASH OUR HANDS OFTEN or STAY HOME, out of public group settings, altogether.**
- **If you do go out to the store, check with neighbors & friends to see if you can pick up items for them (the fewer folks out there, the better!)**
- **Use grocery/pharmacy pick up services & delivery services.**
- **If you go out, make sure to wash your hands, sanitize your carts, car, bag handles, doors knobs, & all high touch areas.**
- **Katie & Larry Miner have volunteered to run NECESSARY errands for folks who are at high risk or cannot get out. You can contact Katie by calling 610-258-4426.**
- **IF YOU TRAVELED out of the area or into an area where covid cases are rising, please be extra cautious about your contacts when you return. You may need to quarantine for the recommended 10-14 days. Please consult current (& ever changing) PA directives.**

Please keep watching your e-mail for updates & information!



The Church Office will be open on a limited basis during this time.

**Please call the office at 610-258-3361 if you need something or before you come,
to make sure someone is there.**

(But we hope you are all practicing “Social Distancing” & only go out if it is absolutely necessary.)

**Please call the office at 610-258-3361 or e-mail us at firstucc2@verizon.net if you have
prayer requests to share or if you are in need of assistance.**

***Say your prayers, wash your hands, wear your mask &
may God’s blessings cover you & those you love!***

~ IMPORTANT COVID VACCINE INFORMATION! ~

With the roll out of the covid-19 vaccines, we wanted to share some info about obtaining a vaccination if you want one. Many of you have the ability to go on line for info yourselves, but not everyone does, so please feel free to share this with others who may need help/guidance.

Please be aware that APPOINTMENTS ARE REQUIRED for vaccinations & Right now, only CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION are able to be vaccinated so please be patient.

**As always – THE BEST SOURCE FOR YOUR INFO IS
YOUR PERSONAL CARE PHYSICIAN!!!!**

We urge everyone to address their concerns or questions with their own doctors.

Please note: This is the info we were able to find as of Jan. 14th, 2021. This is for informational purposes only, we cannot vouch for the accuracy of the info but we will do our best to keep everyone informed of updates & changes that may affect our Congregation & Community.

**Even after you get your vaccination
YOU STILL MUST CONTINUE TO FOLLOW COVID SAFETY PROTOCOLS!
Wear your MASK, Maintain Social Distance,
Wash Your Hands, Avoid Crowds, etc.
Please do not let your guard down, we still must protect each other!**

You can visit the [CDC's Website for Covid-19 Vaccine Info](#)

NJ RESIDENTS

NJ residents have a website to visit to register for an appointment & to obtain other info about the vaccines, what they are, how they work as well as where & when they will be able to get their vaccination. <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>

Anyone can visit the NJ site to gather information about the vaccine, etc. but only NJ residents can make appointments there.

PA is working on creating such a site but it is not yet ready.

PA RESIDENTS

PA is working on creating a registration website similar to NJ's but it is not yet ready. HOWEVER, some of our local health networks have set up their own on line registration sites.

Again, please check with YOUR PERSONAL CARE PHYSICIAN as to where/when you should go. If your doctor is affiliated with one of these Health Networks, you may need to visit their website to register or for info...

[St. Luke's Health Network Covid-19 Vaccine](#) (MyChart acct required to register online) Phone #1-866-785-8537

[Lehigh Valley Health Network](#) (MyLVHN acct required to register online) Phone # 1-888-402-5846

We will do our best to keep everyone informed as best as we can.
If you need assistance, please contact YOUR PERSONAL CARE PHYSICIAN!
Let's all work to keep each other safe!