

**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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:firstucc2@verizon.net)

website: [www.firstucceaston.org](http://www.firstucceaston.org) ~ Facebook (First UCC Easton)

**~ Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 ~**

**~ The Third Sunday After Epiphany ~**



**OPENING HYMN:** ~ "Lead On Eternal Sovereign"

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** (please read responsively: L= Leader, P: People of the Congregation)

L: We yearn to be in the presence of the Holy One,

**P: To linger in the house of prayer,**

L: To walk beside still streams,

**P: To behold the radiance of creation,**

*("Call To Worship" continues...)*

L: To sing as matches our joy,  
P: **To offer our sacrifice of service,**  
L: To dwell all our days enfolded in the love of God,  
P: **To praise God with our deeds and melodies.**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION:**

L: We know that we have not lived according to God's desires for us. The brokenness in the world, and the sin and despair in our hearts, threaten to consume us as a mighty flood. Yet God is our hope and our firm foundation. Let us confess our sin before our gracious God.

### **CONFESSION OF SIN:** (Spoken together, in Unison)

**All: Creating God, in love you moved over the waters of chaos and separated sea from dry land. And yet, we cling tightly to rigid boundaries of our own making. You claim us in the waters of baptism and declare us dead to sin and alive in Christ. But too often we deny that call, conforming ourselves to the whims of culture. At Pentecost, you released your wild and transforming spirit to flow through church and world. But we want to tame that wildness, channeling your spirit through banks of ordered safety. Transform us, we pray. Soften the unyielding edges of our hearts. Loosen our grip on "the way it's always been" and prepare us for the joy of "the way it still can be," through Jesus Christ. 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: Father, as we come to your Word today, give us fresh insight. We invite your Holy Spirit to come guide us as we read, listen, and respond to your truths. The Word of God is a gift, and we thank you for revealing yourself to us through it. May we leave here changed because we have experienced the power of your Word today. Amen.**

## **HOLY SCRIPTURES**

### **Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> is: Jonah 3:1-5,10 (NIV)**

**3** Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: <sup>2</sup> "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

<sup>3</sup> Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." <sup>5</sup> The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

## **Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> is: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 (NIV)**

<sup>29</sup> What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; <sup>30</sup> those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; <sup>31</sup> those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

## **Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> is: Mark 1:14-20 (NIV)**

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

<sup>16</sup> As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>17</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>18</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>19</sup> When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. <sup>20</sup> Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

### **MEDITATION ~ “The Danger of Procrastination”**

Leroy Bull was our next-door neighbor in the summer. He became a wonderful mentor and would have been a Jeopardy Champion. He was a Bell Pioneer and as I headed off to college he gave me some sage advice wrapped in a story about Alexander Graham Bell. Bell he said was an amazingly talented person. He invented the multiple telegraph, the audiometer--which is used to test your hearing--the tricycle landing gear you find on planes, and a host of other less well-known machines.

In addition to this, he was the co-founder of the prestigious magazine *Science*, served as President of the National Geographic Society, and spent his life working with deaf people.

But the most famous of all his creations was, of course, the telephone. It also made his family and his descendants enormously wealthy. But he almost lost it all. Mr. Bull, always Mr. Bull, said Bell never seemed to get around to submitting a patent application. Finally, his father-in-law, who had financed a lot of the research, got so impatient that he filed the patent on Bell's behalf on the 14th of February 1876, Bell's 29th birthday.

And it was a good thing he did, because just a few hours later, another scientist by the name of Elisha Gray went to the patent office to get a patent on a machine he'd been working on for many years--you guessed it, the telephone. Mr. Bull told me, “... some things are so important that you need to act on them NOW. Don't procrastinate.”

A heavy rain had been falling as a man drove down a lonely road. As he rounded a curve, he saw an old farmer surveying the ruins of his barn. The driver stopped his car and asked what had happened.

“Roof fell in,” said the farmer. “Leaked so long it finally just rotted through.”

“Why in the world didn't you fix it before it got that bad?” asked the stranger.

“Well, sir,” replied the farmer, “it just seemed I never did get around to it. When the weather was good, there weren't no need for it, and when it rained, it was too wet to work on!”

Those of you who are homeowners know the perils of allowing home maintenance to slide. But that's true in all of life: In the things that really matter, there is a need to act with urgency.

Consider our lesson for today from Mark's Gospel. Mark tells us that Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, when he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." Mark says, "AT ONCE they left their nets and followed him." Notice that it doesn't say they pondered his invitation. "At once they left their nets and followed him."

"When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. WITHOUT DELAY," says Mark, "he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him."

How did these men respond to Jesus' call? "At once they left their nets and followed him." Without delay he called James and John, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

It always has amazed me that the first four disciples of Jesus' responded to his call without any seeming hesitation. He was asking them to leave their livelihood, leave their families, leave the community they grew up in for an adventure the result of which they could not see--and immediately they heeded his call and followed him. That says a lot about how Jesus came across to people, but it also says much about them. And perhaps it says even more about the task he had called them to.

Mark shows us a Jesus who is in a hurry; a man with a sense of urgency. Someone has noticed that Mark used one word in his Gospel more than any other. It is the word "immediately." This word is used forty times in those brief 16 chapters of Mark's Gospel. The last thing Jesus wants is procrastinators. That's clear in Mark's Gospel. But this is not the only place Jesus expresses a sense of urgency.

In Luke's Gospel Jesus gives the same opportunity to another man who is unknown to us. "Follow me," Jesus said. But this man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God". Jesus' call is one of urgency.

This is the way life is. The really important things require us to respond without delay.

**Consider, for example, how urgent it is that we demonstrate our affection for those we love.** Years ago when the original "Dear Abby" was asked what letter was requested the most for reprinting, she put into her syndicated column this one:

"Dear Abby: I am the most heartbroken person on the earth. I always found time to go everywhere else but to see my old gray-haired parents. They sat at home, loving me just the same. Now when I go to visit their graves . . . I wonder if God will ever forgive me for the heartaches I must have caused them . . ."

A favorite story of mine concerns literary giant Samuel Johnson; it comes from Johnson's boyhood. Johnson's father was a book seller--selling books from town to town--during Johnson's boyhood. Once when his father was very ill, tired and worn down by his constant struggle to support his family, he asked young Samuel to go to the market at a nearby small community to take his place. Young Samuel smugly refused to do so. His father dressed and made the arduous trip himself--never saying a word of reproach to his son.

Fifty years later, the renowned and prosperous Samuel Johnson, now his name a household word throughout England, stood bareheaded for hours close by a spot in that same small community where once his father's bookstall had stood. People stared at him as he stood there almost motionless in the midst of wind and rain. He was remembering that time long ago when his quickly aging father asked of him a small favor and he had smugly refused.

A famous minister, one who had inspired millions of Christians, confessed that he had been an abysmal failure with his own children. "How I wish," he laments, "that when my children were young, I had spent less time with my books and more time with my family."

**There is an urgency about love, is there not?** Children grow up oh so quickly. Time takes its toll in the aging process. There are some persons whose love we treasure today who might not be with us tomorrow or next week or next year. If we are going to take time to show our love for one another, we had better do it now. There is an urgency about the really important things in life. One of those important things is demonstrating our affection for people we love.

Sometimes there is an urgency about demonstrating love.

**There can sometimes be an even greater urgency about altering a lifestyle.** There comes a time when a person must change his or her way of living and do it now.

Many of us are familiar tragic stories of the inroads that drug abuse has made into our society. Athletes, movie stars, children of famous political families as well as ordinary citizens by the thousands are having their lives destroyed by this plague. Interestingly, now the rural communities are most under attack. We know of the depths of alcoholism. How low does a person have to sink--how much money do they have to spend--how many people do they have to hurt--before they say, "Whoa--this is it--I've got to get control of my life?"

There comes a time when fighting a destructive habit or a debilitating weakness you must say, "I must stop now or it will be too late."

There is a story of a man who waited until it was too late. His name was Judas. I wonder if Judas ever intended for Christ to die. I wonder if he ever thought it would go that far. Perhaps Jesus had said something that hurt or offended Judas. That happens sometimes in a church. Maybe Judas felt rejected by the other disciples. Perhaps it troubled him that he was not part of that small circle of disciples closest to Jesus--Peter, James and John--who were always there on significant occasions in Jesus' life. Could it have been simple jealousy? "I'll show them," Judas may have said to himself. But it may be that he never intended for Jesus to be crucified.

"I have betrayed innocent blood," he cried out to the temple authorities as he tried to return their money. "What is that to us?" they said with a sneer as they turned their backs on him. Suddenly Judas realized that it was too late, and he went and hanged himself.

It is an awful thing for folks to wake up and realize it is too late--too late to save their marriage--too late, to realize they are hooked, you're addicted, they've been caught, brought disgrace to their family and friends--too late, they've had that tragic accident. Sometimes

there is an urgency about changing the way you are living? Stop – listen to your friends, your family, to the inner voice before it is too late. Many people put off making necessary changes to their life until tomorrow.

**And, of course, tomorrow never comes.**

Tomorrow, someone has noted, Raphael would finish his painting of “The Transfiguration.” But he died at age thirty-four with the painting only half-finished. Two of his disciples were forced to finish the master’s work.

Sir Walter Scott wrote in his diary in his study at Abbotsford, “Tomorrow, we shall . . .” But this last-written sentence of one of Scotland’s greatest writers was never completed. Tomorrow never came for Sir Walter Scott.

Charles Dickens began writing what would become his final novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, in 1870, with the plan of releasing a new installment every month for a year. But he died before the last installment was ever written and his readers never discovered what happened to poor Edwin.

Important things should never be put off. Life has a way of getting away from us.

Perhaps you know the story of a woman named Florence. Florence was married to a man named Oliver for 58 years before her death. They first got married in Sweden before immigrating to the United States some 30 years ago. After his beloved wife died, Oliver saw the need to put their home in order, and immediately set about it.

While doing so, he found a box, opened it and found some dishes which before he had never seen. He took the dishes to his eldest daughter and asked if she recognized them. Just like her father, she was surprised at seeing them.

Just about then, Oliver’s second daughter came in. “Have you seen these dishes before?” he asked. She looked at the beautiful set of dishes, decorated with colorful paintings and gold. She too had no idea of the origin of the dishes.

As a last resort, Oliver decided to call his late wife’s sister and ask about the dishes. Luckily, she did know of the origin of the dishes. For years before her death Florence collected these dishes piece by piece because she couldn’t afford to buy a complete set. When the collection neared completion she kept the dishes put away in hopes of using them during a special occasion. And because no “special occasion” came around, she chose to lock them away in the box Oliver had found.

Think how much joy Florence could have had displaying her beloved dishes to her friends and family. But she died with the dishes still in a box.

So is it with people who are always putting things off until tomorrow. So often, tomorrow never comes. If you love someone, tell them. If you’re facing an important task, no matter how distasteful, tackle it. You’re not going to enjoy doing it anymore when you can no longer put it off.

**Of course, procrastination with heeding the call of God is the most serious procrastination of all.** I challenge you to find one place in the New Testament where Jesus told anybody to “go home, think it over, and get back to me tomorrow.” It simply doesn’t happen. Jesus comes to Simon and Andrew and James and John at their fishing boats beside the Sea of Galilee and says to them, “Follow me,” and immediately they left their nets and followed him. Jesus’ invitation is always an invitation to do it now!

Especially is that true with the call to follow him.

There was an interesting interview some time ago in *AARP Magazine*, of all places, with the well-known singer/song writer John (Couger) Mellencamp, best known for his 1982 rock song "Jack and Diane." It may be a shock to some of us boomers to realize that Mellencamp is now 69 years old. Time is passing. In this interview Mellencamp had this to say about the final ending of his life: "I intend to make my ending good. I'm hoping it's one of those long, lingering deathbed conversions. A lot of people go, 'I hope I just die quick,'" he continues. "Not me. I need to put things right."

Well, I hope John Mellencamp gets the opportunity for his long conversion, whether he was making a joke about it or not in this interview. Life has a way of playing tricks on us. We may not have as long as we think. And think how much peace and joy John Mellencamp could have in his life in the meantime.

There are some things in life that should not be put off. Telling people we love them is one of them. Correcting a destructive lifestyle is another. But the most important is saying "Yes" to God. Let's take that step today, and every day.



**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH:** (please read responsively: L= Leader, P: People of the Congregation)

L: There is one hope, one calling, to which we are called.

**P: The hope in our lives is Jesus.**

L: There is one hope, one calling, to which we are called.

**P: The call we must answer is God's.**

L: There is one faith, one hope, one Lord of us all.

**P: The Lord of our lives is Jesus.**

L: There is one baptism, one Father, one Mother of all.

**P: The Creator who calls us is God.**

L: We are one body, one family, one church,

**P: woven by the Spirit with bonds of peace.**

L: With Christ's children throughout all of this earth,

**P: we are one body in unity and love.**

**PASTORAL PRAYER:**

L: Show forth, O God, in power and peace what you have done and are doing in our world. Before some of us can sing a song of gladness again, O God, we have to get over something. We have a fear of your story, an estrangement from it. Some of us are angry. Some of us are hurt. And no one seems to notice. They keep telling us everything is going to be okay, but still we're hurt. Help us tell the truth without making people even more afraid of us. All some of us want is the day before we were assaulted ... or hurt ... or betrayed ... or our spouse died. And we know we can't have any day back; we know that some days are just gone. And then comes the season of Epiphany, the time when God is revealed.

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, Doris, Bob and Barbara, Rosalie, David Freytag, Karen B, Tom B., Tom Bauer, Joan G., Fawn B., Cara S., Elwood (Woody) & Brenda Z., Marjorie Harron, Helen Litzenberger, 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.

Reveal yourself, O God, to each one of us. Bring us to your glory and help us move on to new days. In the name of Jesus, who is never far away. Amen.

**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: We bring our gifts and our lives to be blest by the spirit of God. May all that we bring be a sign and witness of our love and devotion to this church. As we offer these gifts, may our lives be renewed and may our church become even more a witness of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

\* **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:** "Let There Be Light, O God of Hosts"



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](mailto: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. 24<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://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 **Meg Dowd & Paul Ricciardi**, in honor of their family members.



**THANKS TO ALL** who helped to keep some of our local folks warm through your donations of hats, scarves, gloves, socks, etc. on our "Angel Tree"! You are Angels!



**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.**



**THANKS TO ALL** who observed Rev., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday & our "**National Day of Service**" this past Mon., by helping us 'Un-Decorate' the Church!



**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](mailto: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 Joan G., Fawn B., Cara S., Elwood (Woody) & Brenda Z., Sue & Bruce D., Marcella D., Bob H., Kelly C & Family, Doris S., Jamie H., Bob & Barbara V., Rosalie (who now is grieving the loss of her brother too), 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 Rosalie L., 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](mailto:raphifer@rcn.com) to get further information about this payment option.





## Steeple Restoration ~

Check out 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 searching .....First 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., Joan G., 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 Rosalie L., 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](mailto: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. 14<sup>th</sup>, 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](#)**

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### **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!