

Greetings!

During this time, while we are suspending worship services at First Church, Rev. Mike would like to share a Sunday morning Gospel lesson & message with you, along with some other information in our 'mini-bulletin'. Please feel free to share it with others.



## ~ 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, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 ~ 10:00 a.m. worship**

**~ The Third Sunday of Lent ~**



Our Gospel Lesson for March 15 is: John 4:1-26 New International Version (NIV)

### **Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman**

**4** Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— <sup>2</sup> although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. <sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup> Now he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup> So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

<sup>7</sup> When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" <sup>8</sup> (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

<sup>9</sup> The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.<sup>[a]</sup>)

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water."

<sup>11</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? <sup>12</sup> Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup> but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

<sup>15</sup> The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

<sup>16</sup> He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

<sup>17</sup> "I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. <sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

<sup>19</sup> "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup> Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

<sup>21</sup> "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup> You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup> Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

<sup>25</sup> The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

<sup>26</sup> Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

### Prayer

Heavenly Father, when our wilderness journey through Lent and our National Health Emergency ends and normalcy returns to our lives, remind us to look back and see where you carried us, deepened our faith and provided us with your loving care.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

Holy Spirit, when suffering is the result of our own sin, inspire us to turn around, ask for help, accept your forgiveness and live a new life in your grace.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

Holy Spirit, reconciling God, in Christ make us a new creation by forgiving our sins and sending us out with a mission to be your ambassadors of love, peace and new life.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

Almighty God, hope beyond hope, love beyond understanding, forgiver and forgetter of our awful sins, wait for us in patience, but needle us with the memory of your loving self, our loving home.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

Lord Jesus, as you told parables in order to make the gospel clear, put us in a story of your choosing, and bring us to a deeper faith in you.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

We pray for those who are in need your healing presence and homecoming, let us all know we have a home in you.

In the day of trial: *Be present, Lord.*

From every wilderness day, good Lord, deliver us.

Amen.

## Message

David McCasland tells about a woman whose car was stalled at an intersection. The hood was up, and she flagged McCasland down to help. "I can't get it started," she said. "but if you jiggle the wire on the battery, I think it will work."

McCasland grabbed the positive battery cable and it came off in his hand. Definitely the cable was too loose. "The terminal needs to be tightened up," he told her. "I can fix it if you have some tools."

"My husband says to just jiggle the wire," she replied. "It always works. Why don't you just try that?"

McCasland paused for a moment, wondering why her husband didn't ride around town with her so he would be available when the wire needed jiggling. Finally, he said, "Ma'am, if I jiggle the

wire, you're going to need someone else to do it every time you shut the engine off. If you'll give me two minutes and a wrench, we can solve the problem and you can forget about it."

Reluctantly, she fumbled under the front seat and then extended a crescent wrench through the window of the old car. As he tightened the battery terminal, it occurred to McCasland how many times he had tried, in his own life, to get a "quick fix" from God. "I have this problem, Lord, and if You'll just jiggle the wire, things will be OK. I'm in a hurry, so let's just get me going again the quickest way possible." But God doesn't want to "jiggle wires," does He? He wants to take the time necessary to deal with our real problem and fix it.

To get the long-term solution to the pressing needs in our lives requires a complete surrender to God and a willingness to proceed on His terms. We must cooperate with Him in whatever it takes for as long as it takes. As the lady drove away with her tightened terminal, McCasland stopped for a moment and asked the Lord to say "No!" the next time he asks God to just jiggle a wire.

We all fall into the trap of asking God for the short term solution, to just jiggle the wire when confronted with difficult situations. As we read the lesson from John today we see Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman and what he does with her is totally change her life. He challenged her, he created change in her and provided her with the living water that is available to us as we seek to deal with the challenges that confront us. We cannot ask Jesus to simply jiggle the wires we must ask him to transform our lives.

Amen.



**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.**



**Please note: Rev. Dowd will be dropping his home phone “landline” so if you need to reach him, please call or text his cell phone 610-216-5471.**



## IMPORTANT FIRST CHURCH NOTES...

Rev. Dowd & our First Church Consistory 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.

We will be meeting this week to discuss upcoming events, projects & fund raisers that are already in progress (“Shoo Fly Cake” sale, Easter candy sale, Barbeque sale). We will share information on these decisions as soon as we are able.

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.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **TODAY, SUN., MARCH 15<sup>th</sup> is the DEADLINE for info for our APRIL STEEPLE NEWS!**  
Please get all Easter Worship info, as well as info about upcoming events, meetings, gatherings, projects, & other church family news into the office ASAP.



- **THIS TUES., MARCH 17<sup>th</sup> is St. Patrick’s Day! Celebrate safely because “everyone is Irish on St. Patrick’s Day”!**
- **THIS WED., MARCH 18<sup>th</sup> is the DEADLINE to order “SHOO FLY CAKE”.**
- **THIS THURS., MARCH 19<sup>th</sup> is the FIRST DAY OF SPRING!  
HALLELUJAH!!!**



**We have some special FUND RAISERS in progress right now...**



- **Linda Wright is selling Easter candy to benefit “YOKEFELLOWSHIP PRISON MINISTRIES” – Order DEADLINE is Wed., April 1<sup>st</sup>.**

(Announcements continue...)

- Our FIRST LADIES have 2 fund raiser sales going on - both to benefit our STEEPLE FUND.
- A “SHOE FLY CAKE” sale - Order DEADLINE is THIS WED., March 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - “BEEF or CHICKEN BARBEQUE” sale – Order DEADLINE is Wed., April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**ALSO...**



- We are also currently taking EASTER FLOWER ORDERS (DEADLINE Sun., March 29<sup>th</sup>) & dedications to our “SUNSHINE FUND” (DEADLINE Palm Sun., April 5<sup>th</sup>) for Easter.



*This week, we will be discussing the status of these fundraisers/sales, methods of distribution for orders, etc. We will share that info as soon as we are able.*

**Many of the community events we have been posting about in our recent Sun. bulletins have been CANCELED...**

- The remaining Church Women United’s Tues. Lenten Meditation programs have been canceled.
- St. Luke’s new “EASTON COMMUNITY CENTERED HEALTH HOME” OPEN HOUSE scheduled for Mon., March 30<sup>th</sup> has been canceled.

**ALSO, we are awaiting confirmation about the following planned events...**

- FREE COMMUNITY BREAKFAST scheduled for Sat., March 28<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 a.m. at St. John’s Lutheran Church (4<sup>th</sup> & Ferry Sts.).



- Jean Rothermel’s “EASTER EGG COLORING PARTY” scheduled for Mon., March 30<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. - at her home.

- Our March 22<sup>nd</sup> worship, Annual Meeting, Ice Cream Social & “Shoo Fly Cake” pick up.

*We will share updates on the status of these events as soon as we get confirmation.*



## **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 remain in high risk positions, in order to serve & protect us during this national health emergency & their families.** Those in Health Care, First Responders, all those who wait on us in stores, restaurants & 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. We pray for those who reside in group facilities (nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, group homes, etc.) we pray for Your protection over them Father.

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.

**Please keep these folks in your prayers...** Baby Cree & Trevor & Taylor C., Bob G., Bob L., Chauncy H., Chris, Chris H., Debbie S. & Family, Deacon Anthony Koury, David D., Denise, Beverly F., Doris S., Edward, Eleanor, The Elliot Family, Evelyn R., Fawn B., Ferne, Greg D., Helena, James R., Jeanette O. & Family, Jill R., Joe R., John M., John & Laura O., Kai & Kathy, Kathleen D., Kim Kely, Lila, Lloyd S. Jr, Marjorie H., Mark, Marlene M., Michael R., Nancy M., Nancy & Ken A., Naomi, Nicole A., The Newhard Family, Phil & Mary Ellen C., Phyllis K., Ray U., Robert G., Robert S., Robert T., Ruth F., Shelly D., Stewart W., Tom V., William C., Will P., Jr. & all those affected by the recent storms, fires & other natural disasters, and now disease, 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, for the Rush Family, the Flad/Orso Family & All whose broken hearts endlessly grieve. LORD, send Your sweet, tender & restorative love to cover them all.

**Jesus, we pray for our Nation, that we can come together for each other.**

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.

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 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 your mercy, grace for all those killed & healing for those wounded & for the families of the victims of the latest acts of gun violence. LORD, HELP US!!! Please take hold of those who are so rage filled or unstable that they unleash horrible evil into this world. Give our leaders the courage & compassion to help prevent any more of these tragedies.

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.**



***Say your prayers, wash your hands & be blessed!***