

Greetings from First UCC!

We pray that God's blessings continue to fill your home and touch your life!

Big Hallelujah News!

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...

[July 26th Worship Service](#)

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, July 26th, 2020 ~

~ The Eighth Sunday After Pentecost ~



Opening Hymn: #277 ~ “Holy, Holy, Holy”

Call to Worship: (Please read responsively)

L: The word of God comes into our lives in many ways.

P: God’s word comes to us, calling us to action and to new life.

L: God’s word calls us now, here in our worship.

P: God’s calling word invites us to service and ministry, to praise and thanksgiving.

All: We worship the living God and offer our praises to the eternal One.

Call to Confession:

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:

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:

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)

Gracious God, as we turn to your Word for us, may the Spirit of God rest upon us. Help us to be steadfast in our hearing, in our speaking, in our believing and in our living. Amen.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, July 26th is: Genesis 29:15-28 (NIV)

¹⁵ Laban said to him, “Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.”

¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.¹⁷ Leah had weak^[a] eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. ¹⁸ Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, “I’ll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel.”

¹⁹ Laban said, “It’s better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me.” ²⁰ So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her.”

²² So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. ²³ But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. ²⁴ And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

²⁵ When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?”

²⁶ Laban replied, “It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one.²⁷ Finish this daughter’s bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work.”

²⁸ And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife.

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, July 26th is: Romans 8:26-39 (NIV)

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.

²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[a] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

More Than Conquerors

³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?³⁶ As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”^[b]

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[c] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, July 26th is: Matthew 13:31-33 & 44-52 (NIV)

Verses 31-33

³¹ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

³³ He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds^[a] of flour until it worked all through the dough.

Verses 44-52

⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

“Yes,” they replied.

⁵² He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

Meditation ~ “A Pearl of Great Price” ~

There are some things in life that are worth any price. How much would you take for your health? For one of your children? For your good mind? Many of us do not appreciate the really important things in life until we lose them. But there are some things that are priceless, though we may not realize their worth at the time.

When Joseph Haydn worked for years as a composer for a certain Prince Paul in Germany, the Prince's advisors constantly advised him that the money could better be spent on fortifications and arms what good was music? What good, indeed! Prince Paul has long been forgotten. Germany has had many wars. But the music of Joseph Haydn lives forever.

Of course, even works of art have a relative value. Bernard Tristain once won a newspaper competition by providing the best answer to the question: "If a fire broke out in the Louvre and you could save only one painting, which one would it be?" His reply was, "The one nearest the exit." I can sympathize with that.

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field. The kingdom of heaven, he added, is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all he had and bought it. In other words, no matter how much you may own, no matter how glamorous you may be, no matter how high on the I. Q. scale you register, if you have missed out on the kingdom of heaven, you have missed out on the one thing in life whose value exceeds all others.

IF THAT IS SO, DON'T YOU THINK THAT YOU AND I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THAT KINGDOM, AND FURTHERMORE, DON'T YOU THINK THAT THIS SHOULD BE OUR FOREMOST VOCATION TO APPROPRIATE THAT KINGDOM FOR OURSELVES?

What can we say this morning about the kingdom of heaven? By the way, the terms kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God are considered by scholars to be interchangeable. It may be that Matthew was hesitant to write the name "God" for fear of violating the holiness of God's name, so he used the term "kingdom of heaven." What is this kingdom that Christ spent most of his ministry proclaiming?

THE FIRST THING WE CAN SAY ABOUT THE KINGDOM IS THAT IT IS A PRESENT REALITY.

One prominent Bible scholar estimates that of the 27 references to the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven in primary sources, 18 imply a kingdom that is already here. "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed," said the Master, "Nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (Luke 17: 20-21) Here is the primary defect in the discipleship of many believers. We come to Christ and make a commitment to him, and then we put our spiritual development on hold waiting until that day we enter the pearly gates in the world to come. My friends, wherever God is, there is heaven. Heaven is not a distant dream but a present reality. The kingdom of God is the kingly rule of God in the hearts of believers.

I simply cannot understand why there are so many sour Christians. Have we not seen? Have we not heard? The kingdom of God is available to us here and now. Some of us are like the old farmer who was always complaining about the insects or the weather or the low price at market. Finally came a year when all the conditions were favorable, and he brought in a bumper crop. "Well, you have it made now," said a friend. "Well, it's fair," said the farmer. "Of course, a harvest like this is pretty hard on the soil." You simply cannot please some people. They will never be satisfied.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS A PRESENT REALITY. It is available now to anyone who will receive it. That is the first thing we need to see. Here is the second. THE KINGDOM IS ALSO A PRECIOUS RELATIONSHIP. Jeremiah foretold the coming of this kingdom hundreds of years before Jesus. He wrote: "And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me." The claim that we can "know" the God of all creation the notion that we can have direct access to Him the teaching that Jesus gave us that God is like a loving Father to each of His children is a statement of faith far beyond our feeble brains.

Several years ago, the newspapers carried a human-interest story about a little boy who was riding a bus across town. He was huddled close to an exquisitely dressed lady and was swinging his leg out into the aisle when he accidentally rubbed his shoe against the woman who sat across from him. Angrily she protested to the lady next to whom he sat, "Pardon me, but would you make your little boy remove his dirty feet from the seat?" The well-dressed lady took a hard look at the youngster as if she had not been really aware of him before and giving him a shove said, "He's not my boy. I never saw him before."

Embarrassed, the little boy moved aside and sunk down in the seat as if to try to shrink from view. It was obvious that he was fighting back tears. "I'm sorry," he said to the lady whose dress he had soiled. "I didn't mean to." The lady was no longer angry, and she felt badly that she had responded the way she had. "That's all right," she said. "Are you going somewhere alone?" He lowered his head and answered, "Yes, I always travel alone. My mommy and daddy are both dead, so I live with my Aunt Maggie. But when she gets tired of me, she sends me to Aunt Elizabeth." The lady asked sympathetically, "Are you on your way to Aunt Elizabeth's now?" The child answered, "Yes, but Aunt Elizabeth is hardly ever home. I hope she is home today though. It sure is cold."

"You sure are young to be riding the bus alone," said the lady. "It's OK," said the boy, "I never get lost but sometimes I get awful lonesome. So, when I see someone I'd like to belong to, I sit real close to them and pretend they're my family. That's what I was doing when I got your dress dirty. I forgot about my feet." The lady moved over to the little boy and put her arms around him. He just wanted badly to belong to somebody.

Isn't that the greatest need that all of us have? What is the kingdom of heaven except the knowledge that we belong in the family of God? Heaven isn't jasper walls and streets of gold. Heaven is being in the presence of people we love and in the presence of God. This church ought to be a little slice of heaven. Your family ought to be a little slice of heaven. If they are not, it may be that we are still some distance from the kingdom.

THIS BRINGS US TO THE FINAL THING TO BE SAID: THE KINGDOM IS A PRESENT REALITY. THE KINGDOM IS A PRECIOUS RELATIONSHIP. FINALLY, THE KINGDOM, AS WE KNOW IT, IS AN IMPERFECT REPRESENTATION.

The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God that we experience in this world is just a foretaste of the kingdom that is to come. There is a city whose builder and maker is God. The kingdom of heaven is not only present, but it is also future. That is why Jesus told us to pray, "Thy kingdom come." (Mt. 6:10) There will come a time when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our God and he will reign forever and ever! The wonderful privilege that God gives us is to prepare the world for this great kingdom. As St. Paul has written, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and giving to us the ministry of reconciliation...."

Keith Miller in his book, Sharing the Taste of New Wine gives a beautiful example of that reconciling work. He tells about a man named Jack who had been a professional boxer and a

Marine. He was a hostile man and liked to party. He was far from a model husband and father. Indeed, he was so fierce that when he came home at night his wife would send their four children out to play in the back yard.

Jack came to a Conference that Keith Miller was leading. At the end of the Conference Jack went to a member of the staff and said, "I want to be a Christian. I want to get converted." The staff member talked with Jack and suggested a few things he might now do in response to this decision. One of his suggestions was that Jack not tell anyone about his experience but that he ease himself slowly into this new life. A month later Jack came back and shared a most moving testimony. About a week after he had come home, he said, his twelve-year old boy knocked on his study door.

The boy had some real problems. He had no friends at school. He was never chosen for ball teams. Recently he had been caught stealing in the neighborhood. So, when he knocked on his father's study door, his father was eager to talk with him. His son came in and said, "Uh, daddy, uh, what's HAPPENED to you?"

Jack was embarrassed. He was a tough guy. It was not easy for him to talk about his feelings. With difficulty but much joy he shared with his son how Christ had come into his life and how Christ was helping him love people more. After a long silence his son asked, "Daddy...do you suppose that I could give my life to Jesus, too?" Jack was stunned. They looked at each other and they embraced, which they had not done in several years. "That night," said Jack, "my boy started being happy."

About a week later, Jack flew to New York. When he flew back there was his son, who never came to the airport to meet his dad, waiting to greet him. As Jack stepped off the plane his son ducked under the chain and ran to meet him. "Daddy," he said excitedly, "Do you know what God has done?" Jack said, "No, what, son?" With an expression of awe, the boy replied, "Daddy, God's changed every kid in my class!" Something tells me that father introduced his family to the kingdom of heaven.

Has your family been introduced to the kingdom? How about your neighborhood or the place where you work? God will bring in his kingdom someday. In the meantime, however, he is calling us to prepare the way. That is the most important task we have. It is the pearl of great price for which a merchant will sell everything he owns.



Affirmation of Faith: (Please read together in Unison)

**All: Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn of all creation.**

**For in him all things in heaven and on earth were created:
things visible and invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers;
all things have been created through him and for him.**

He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church;

**he is the beginning, the firstborn from among the dead,
so that he might come to have first place in everything.**

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,
and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven,
by making peace through the blood of his cross.**

Offertory Prayer: (Please read together in Unison)

All: Thanks be to thee, O God, for all good gifts, and especially for thy inexpressible gift of the Lord Jesus. Help us, O Lord, to see wherein we have been blessed, and to be a blessing to others. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer:

Loving God, we come to you in gratitude for your love, which is always present to us. In the stillness of these moments, we remember with thanksgiving the times in our lives when your love has enabled us to rise to our better selves. We thank you for the gift of your Son, who came that we might know what perfect love looks like.

We remember, too, the times when we have acted in anger rather than in love; we recall with remorse when our patience has been less than perfect and our behavior has been childish and surly. Forgive us for the occasions when we have loved things and used people and when we have failed to make love a priority in our lives.

Today we pause in the midst of our prayers to share in the joy of the Arnold Family; Laura and Kevin Arnold are the proud parents of Jackson Keith Arnold. We continue to keep Wendy Wandersee, Sal Giamoni, Janet Kobler's cousin Karen B, Jeanette Orso, Gregg D, Linda Arnold's Father Harold Mims, Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Evelyn Ritter, Phyllis Rush, Helen Litzenberger, George Beling, and Danny K.

Breathe in us new life, instilling us with enthusiasm for the opportunities we have to begin again. Empowered by your love for us, O God, let us unite ourselves with all of life in the example of Jesus, the Lord of our lives. Help us to be intentional in the way we interact with one another, so that there can be no doubt as to whom we serve. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth,
As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom,
The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN: #537 - "Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed"

Benediction:

Beloved, you are ambassadors for the kingdom of God! Strengthened in hearing the Word proclaimed and sitting at God's table, go into the world secure in God's blessing and love to share the good news. Amen.

Pastor's Recessional Music

Postlude



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, July 26th, 2020 ~

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.

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!**



NEXT SUN., AUG. 2nd we will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion at our 10 a.m. live worship service. It will be the first time we will share the Sacrament together since March & it will be a very special time. Please join us if you are able.

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.



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.

This week we will look at two beautiful psalms 46 and 121. Everyone is welcome to join in!



“SUNSHINE FUND” - We are also most grateful for continued donations to our “Sunshine Fund”, which goes to assist any of our First Church Family members who are in need. **THIS FUND IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT RIGHT NOW, with many people being out of work due to this health emergency.** Though we have published our Easter dedications today, we are still accepting donations to our “Sunshine Fund”.
A REMINDER – If you are experiencing an emergency need, please contact the Church Office or Rev. Mike directly. All requests will be kept confidential.



DID YOU RETURN YOUR 2020 CENSUS FORM? It’s not too late! This is an important count because it affects government representation, funding & other things. So, if you haven’t completed yours, please do. If you need assistance, please ask or visit <https://www.census.gov/en.html>

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”.]*

“Church Family News” continues...



JOYOUS, HALLELUJAH NEWS!!! Bob and Doreen Arnold are proud to announce the arrival of their grandson, **Jackson Keith Arnold**. Mom and Dad, Laura & Kevin are proud parents, all are doing well!

We pray for blessings to cover little baby Jackson & his family!!!!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS, PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING!

Thanks to everyone for your prayers and well wishes. ♥

~ Jeannette Orso



Our own Linda Wright has had her **SECOND BOOK PUBLISHED** **“55 (More) Journal Pages ~ Grace Upon Grace”**. It is also available as a paperback & e-book on Amazon, as well as her first book **“333 Journal Pages”**.

STEWARDSHIP NOTE ~



- 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 envelope 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.



'SAVE THE FIRST STEEPLE' project update ~ Work Begins TOMORROW, July 27th!

It's happening! **A high lift will be moved into the courtyard on July 27th to begin work!** This lift will reach up to the Weathervane, where Gordon Bennett Painting will begin their work! Sorry, no lift rides available!!



We are proud to report that we have just reached our \$90,000 fundraising mark, on our way to the \$125,000 goal! A few Final sponsorships are still available at \$2500 each, as well as, a new lighting sponsorship!

Let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in one of these sponsorships for your beautiful historic church!

We will be posting videos of how the project is progressing on our website FirstUCCEaston.org so please check it out!

~ Doreen Arnold, Steeple Project Chair



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) & others ~ 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.

Please keep these folks in your prayers... Baby Jackson Keith Arnold & family, Joseph & Melissa Dennis who were married here yesterday, Beverly F., Bob G., Bob L., Chris, Danny K., Debbie S. & Family, Deacon Anthony Koury, Doris S., Evelyn R., Fawn B., Ferne, Gregg D., Helena, James R., Jeanette O. & Family, Jill R., Joe R., Kim Kely, Lila, Marilyn Crozier Snuggs, Marjorie H., Mark, Marlene M., Michael R., Nancy M., Nancy & Ken A., Naomi, Nicole A., Ray U., Ruth F., "Sal: G., Stewart W., Wendy W. & 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 Berger Family, The Lowe 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, 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 that You will give our leaders the courage & compassion to make changes that will begin to heal our nation.

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.



**Even though we have moved “Into the Green”, we all need to continue to be “Corona Warriors”
We need to protect our loved ones, ourselves & those around us!**

- **IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY HOME & CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR.**
- **We should still LIMIT CONTACT IN PUBLIC PLACES and WEAR MASKS.**
- **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.**

**Please keep watching your e-mail for updates & information!
Say your prayers, wash your hands & stay well!**



**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!***

