

Greetings 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!



**THIS SUN., AUG. 23rd we will hold our
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING!**

**We encourage ALL of our members to attend to hear about our plans & to help
us move forward into the future!**

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...**

[August 23rd 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

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~ Sunday, August 23rd, 2020 ~

~ The Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost ~

~ Annual Congregational Meeting, Immediately Following Worship ~



Opening Hymn: #448 ~ “Take My Life, God, Let It Be”

Call to Worship: (Please read responsively – L = Leader, P = People)

L: Your light is your Word; your blessings are our lamp.

P: **Dark and twisting is the road to peace; happy the generation whose light will guide them to its end.**

All: **When all our children are taught of the Lord, great shall be the peace of all children.**

Call to Confession:

Let us in humility and contrition acknowledge and confess our sins toward God and one another.

Confession of Sin: (Spoken together, in Unison)

Righteous God, we confess with sorrow that we often forget who has given us light, who has made our garden grow with waters of love. We forget your living word and move off your paths to serve our own worldly desires. We leave your cultivated field to venture out into the wilderness on our own. We quarrel with one another trying to decide “who is the greatest.” We make our own faces the benchmark for all faces. Help us to remember Jesus, reconciling the whole variegated world in himself.

Assurance of Pardon:

Thank you for calling us back, for never giving up on us when we turn aside, for always loving us, even when we forget who we are and who you are. We know you, as the greatest Gardener of all, who has promised always to replant us in flourishing fields.

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:

L: God, source of all light, by your Word you give light to the soul. Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and understanding that our hearts and minds may be opened. Amen

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Aug. 23rd is: Exodus 1:8-2:10 (NIV)

⁸ Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. ⁹ “Look,” he said to his people, “the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. ¹⁰ Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country.”

¹¹ So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. ¹² But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites ¹³ and worked them ruthlessly. ¹⁴ They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

¹⁵ The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, ¹⁶ “When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live.” ¹⁷ The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. ¹⁸ Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?”

¹⁹ The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.”

²⁰ So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. ²¹ And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

²² Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: “Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live.”

The Birth of Moses

² Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket^[a] for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

⁵ Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. “This is one of the Hebrew babies,” she said.

⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?”

⁸ “Yes, go,” she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. ⁹ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.” So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses,^[b] saying, “I drew him out of the water.”

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Aug. 23rd is: Romans 12:1-8 (NIV)

¹² Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Aug. 23rd is: Matthew 16:13-20 (NIV)

²¹ Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

²³ Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

²⁵ The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

²⁶ He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

²⁷ “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Meditation ~ “Sacrifice for Success” ~

In January 2019, Russian pianist Elisey Mysin strode onto the stage of the concert hall in an industrial city of more than a half million people, about 600 miles due east of Moscow. He smiled confidently at the audience. The hall was packed. He was dressed in a concert-style black tuxedo, which contrasted nicely with a mane of flowing blond hair. He sat on the piano bench, and then took a few moments to adjust it for height and distance to the keyboard, rested his hands on the keyboard and nodded to the conductor.

The orchestra began to play and soon Mysin was coaxing magic out of the grand piano, playing the challenging “Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Major” by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who composed the three-movement concerto when he was only 11 years old. Mysin played without music, typical of professional, classical pianists, and played, according to one critic, in a way that showcased “his incredible sense of style and interpretation.”

At the end of his performance, Mysin received a huge standing ovation, two bouquets of flowers then he walked off the stage, and into the arms of his mother, who took him home, where she read him a bedtime story and tucked him in.

Mysin, at the time, was 8 years old.

Now consider Anna Ji-Eun Lee, who had her debut as a violinist when she performed Paganini’s “Violin Concerto No. 1” with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Lan Shui, conducting.

She was 6 years old.

These are just two of many stories of child prodigies whose expertise and virtuosity astounds and amazes.

But why bring this up?

The stories of Lee and Mysin have a bearing on our understanding — or misunderstanding — of the so-called “10,000-hour rule” that Malcolm Gladwell popularized several years ago in his bestselling book, *Outliers*.

Gladwell suggested that expertise, world-class success and virtuosity is usually gained through practicing a certain specific task for 10,000 hours. If you spent 20 hours a week doing this, you could reach success after about 10 years.

But wait! How about little Anna Ji-Eun Lee? When Anna played Paganini, she was just 52,560 hours old.

Subtract 21,900 for sleep, 5,000 for playing with Beanie Babies, 2,000 listening to Mom read a bedtime story, 2,000 for getting a bath, 2,000 for watching Sesame Street and cartoons, 200 for going to Sunday school with parents, and — most importantly — learning how to use a spoon, how to talk and how to use the potty, 15,000 ... Well, at this point she’s at 48,100 hours.

She only has 4,460 hours left to practice the violin.

She doesn’t have 10,000 hours available to become a world-class violinist. Yet she is ... a world-class violinist at the age of 6.

Gladwell explains that the 10,000-hour rule doesn’t apply to sports or concert pianists and violinists, and he confesses that, “I could play chess for 100 years and I’ll never be a grandmaster. The point is simply that natural ability requires a huge investment of time in order to be made manifest.”

But, still, he was on to something, wasn’t he?

Let’s find out.

To do this, let’s go to Romans 12, looking particularly at verses 1 and 2: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, *to present your bodies as a living sacrifice*, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect”.

The apostle Paul’s call for a *sacrifice*. This evokes in the minds of his readers what was then a well-known image: the shedding of blood on an altar particularly set aside for sacrificial purposes. The blood of a lamb, calf or bullock was shed for the propitiation of sins. This practice was routine in the lives of the Hebrews for millennia. The ritual details are still available to us in the books of the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.

Getting sins atoned was a bloody mess, and it invariably involved a death.

Paul’s readers understood that the point he was making was that followers of Jesus need to be *all in*.

But Paul doesn’t just say our lives should be a sacrifice.

He doesn’t argue that we should bleed out on the altar of Christian service.

Instead, he suggests in a quite oxymoronic way that we present our bodies as *living sacrifices*, that is, *sacrifices that do not die! Living deaths!*

Child prodigies are examples of this. They are all in, and their lives are given entirely to their music or their sport (like golf or tennis). They do not *surrender* their lives; they *offer* their lives. They give up almost everything else. They live for it. It is their life.

And so it is for us today. We're called to be all in. To die — by being alive to what these verses call our “spiritual worship.”

But now, what are specific aspects of this “living sacrifice.” One thing that snags our attention is his reference to the “renewing of your minds.” This is interesting because mindfulness and one's mindset are very trendy topics right now.

For Paul, it's all about mindset. A Christian is something with an extraordinary, unusual, unconventional and non-conformist way of looking at things. For followers of Jesus, transformation is where it's at, what it's all about. The “it” in that sentence is life — the abundant life, the life to which Jesus has called us.

In his letter to the Philippians, the apostle — whose life would ultimately bleed out in Rome as an actual sacrifice, suggests that we have the same “mind” that was in Christ Jesus.

The transformative mindset can turn the world upside down. Bring together a group of people with this mindset and who knows what can happen?

And what is such a group called? The church!

Malcolm Gladwell concedes that natural ability is a factor in world-class success. He admits he will never be a grandmaster.

So are some people “natural Christians,” and others not so natural?

Why is it easier for some Christians to be nice, humble, caring, loving and kind than for others?

Tough question. But if it helps, we might remember to scratch out the idea that we can ever be successful at living godly lives — unless *we can get ourselves a new nature!*

And this is precisely what the apostle Paul has already discussed with his Roman audience. See chapters 5-8.

Not only do we have a new nature in Christ Jesus, we have been given special aptitudes, gifts, that will bless the body of Christ in general and people in our own sphere of influence in particular. Paul discusses this in the epistle reading for today.

Let's look closer.

Gladwell argues that what distinguishes many virtuosos and prodigies is not only their natural talent, but their ability *to practice in the right way*. Pianists know when they need to practice left hand octave arpeggios; tennis players know when and how to work on their baseline topspin backhand strokes.

Practice for prodigies is not haphazard.

That's the point of Paul's comments about the gifts of the Spirit. “We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness” .

We have “natural” ability, that is, we have the mind and nature of Christ. But we should be careful about how we practice.

If we’re teaching, we should focus on teaching, not on leadership and administration; if we are kindhearted and compassionate, we should pursue our altruistic instincts with a passion, and not complain about our ineptitude as teachers. And so on.

Some psychologists and educators call this “staying in our lane.”

Perhaps practicing our passions, focusing on the right kind of practice or committing ourselves to this kind of service will be difficult.

It might mean sacrifice. Some sweat and blood may be involved.

But then, we realize something else that’s truly amazing.

The astonishing truth hits us: This is our “spiritual worship”!

The sacrifice, the blood, sweat and tears, the self-denial, the transformative mindset, the relentless practicing in the right way — it’s our worship. It is a sweet incense that floats pleasantly into the very presence of God.

We don’t know what will become of Elisey Mysin. He’s only 10 years old or so. He’s still playing the piano in the heart of Russia.

But at age 6, Anna Ji-Eun Lee was accepted as a student at the Pre-College of the Juilliard School to study under Masao Kawasaki. She graduated from the Juilliard School in 2013, and went on to study at Harvard. She’s been working with Ana Chumachenco as a Young Soloist at Kronberg Academy. She has performed in the most highly acclaimed venues in the United States, including several performances at Carnegie Hall.

She knows all about sacrificing for success. About transformation. Mindset. Practicing in the right way.

We know what has become of her.

But what will become of us?

How will we bless the world? How will our “audience” thrill at the virtuosity of our transformative ministry? How will we serve Jesus in our church, our community, among our friends, among neighbors, co-workers, the lost and needy, the lowly and downcast?

For the apostle Paul, bringing his letter to the church at Rome to a close, these are the important questions. He knew then that the world needs Jesus people who are all in, who will sacrifice for success — the kind of success that reconciles and connects people to God.



Affirmation of Faith: (Please read responsively)

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.

(“Affirmation” continues...)

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: Merciful Savior, you have called each of us to run the race of faith with joy, trust, commitment and love. For some today, the race is energizing, full of scenic beauty and gentle breezes, filled with hope and promise. For others, the race has reached the arduous climb through the mountains, and our bodies and our spirits strain with every step. Still others are in the home stretch, the finish line within sight, and the race — and life — is drawing to a close. Precious Friend, we ask you to meet each of us in our need this day, whatever our stage of the race. We ask you, too, to use us to encourage those who are weary and have lost heart, to help carry the burdens of those who are troubled, to give companionship along the path to those who are grieving, lonely or suffering, and to share the joys of life with those who are celebrating.

Today we remember in love the life of Megan McGinley, and we share the grief of Naomi Protyniak, Tim McGinley, and Pam. We pray for continued healing for Collette Andreadis, Bob Arnold Wendy Wandersee, Jeanette Orso, Sal Giamoni, Danny K, Bonnie David, Janet Kobler's cousin Karen B, and Harold Mims. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, and Helen Litzenberger, in our prayers.

We thank you that we do not run this race of faith alone, for you are always with us to guide, support, comfort and love, and we are surrounded by all the saints of the faith, past and present, who cheer us on our way. 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: Gracious Spirit, you have showered us with your gifts, and we embrace you with thanksgiving. May our embrace be arms wide open, ready to share, to serve and to love. Use our spiritual gifts that we may live the spiritual life, moving according to the Spirit's heated touch and bending in the direction of God's holy will.

* **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.**

Closing Hymn: #76 - "Sent Forth by God's Blessing"

Benediction:

We go out into the world praying that you will help us to return to you, O Lord; then, truly shall we return. Renew our days as in the past. Amen.



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, Aug. 16th, 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.



TODAY!!! We will hold our ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING TODAY, SUN. AUGUST 23rd immediately following our worship service. We hope all of our members can attend! If you recall, our meetings was originally scheduled for March 22nd. A LOT has happened since then so we invite everyone to participate in planning our future!



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!**



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.



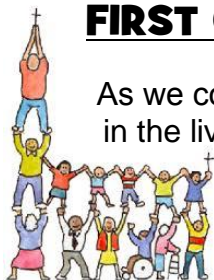
Rev. Mike is hosting a Virtual WED. EVENING BIBLE STUDY via Zoom, live at 7:00 p.m.! (NOT 7:30) can join in on the computer or on the PHONE!!! This virtual, live, group Bible Study runs from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what topics come into the conversation. You can join in on line or, you can CALL 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.



“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.**



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...



KEEP IN PRAYER... Please keep Jeannette O. in prayer, for healing & peace after her surgery this past week, Bob A. for a quick recovery from his hip replacement surgery, Wendy for recovery from her back surgery & Moe. Keith B. needs prayers for upcoming tests. Bonnie D. needs prayers for healing of an aneurysm & Colette A. who is battling horrifying Covid symptoms. We offer prayers of sympathy to Megan McGinley’s family.

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.

Also, please pray for the safety of the painting technicians & other contractors who are working on our Steeple restoration project. At times they are working 130 ft. up!



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”**.



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>



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 envelop number is on it.
 - **Online Giving**, which allows you to make your contributions online from either your bank checking or bank savings account. If you are interested in this online option, please contact Rich Phifer at 610-217-9244 or email Rich at raphifer@rcn.com to get further information about this payment option.



'SAVE THE FIRST STEEPLE' project update ~ Work is in progress!



It's happening! A high lift is in the courtyard & will reach up to the Weathervane, where Gordon Bennett Painting technicians are working!

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!
 ~ Doreen Arnold, Steeple Project Chair

Check out all of our Steeple Project Videos on our website or our [NEW YouTube Channel!!!](#)




ATTENTION PA PROPERTY OWNERS & RENTERS! HELP IS AVAILABLE!

The PA Housing Finance Agency (PAHFA) has **federal CARES ACT dollars available to assist with Mortgage** (for homeowners or landlords) **or Rent** (for tenants) **payments.**

THE APPLICATION DEADLINE IS SEPT. 30th, 2020. Please visit the PAHFA website for application forms, document lists, income guidelines, & all the info you will need to register for the program... <https://www.phfa.org/pacares/rent.aspx>
 or call 1-855-827-3466

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.

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... Baby Jackson Keith Arnold & family, Joseph & Melissa Dennis who were married here recently, Beverly F., Bob A., Bob G., Bob L., Chris, Colette A., 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 Kelty, 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 family of Megan McGinley, the Galante/Rapp Family, 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.**
- **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 14 days. Please consult current (& ever changing) PA directives.**

**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!***

