

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!



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...

[September 6th 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, September 6th, 2020 ~
~ The Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost ~
~ Labor Day Weekend ~



Opening Hymn: #4 ~ "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"

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

L: We are to God like precious coins,

P: Worth searching for when one is lost.

L: We are to God like precious sheep,
P: **Worth seeking out when we wander from God's fold.**
All: **Come, Good Shepherd among us; find us as we worship you.**

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: (Spoken together, in Unison)

Our God, forgive us for failing to understand and accept the great demands placed upon us by your love. We enlist in your causes, but find ourselves losing interest. We promise to be courageous, but find ourselves afraid. We want to be sensitive, but find ourselves hard and callous. Forgive us; take our limitations and turn them into possibilities for service. Have mercy on us and grant us your peace. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: (Please read responsively)

L: Leader: Listen! Here is good news: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."
-to forgive us in our follies and foibles
-to accept us as we are
-to set us free from evil's power and make us what we were meant to be.

P: **Thanks be to God.**

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: (Please read responsively)

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.

P: **Amen.**

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 6th is: Exodus 12:1-4 (NIV)

The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ²“This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb^[a] for his family, one for each household. ⁴If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat.

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 6th is: Romans 13:8-14 (NIV)

⁸ Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,”^[a] and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”^[b] ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The Day Is Near

¹¹ And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.^[c]

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 6th is: Matthew 18:15-20 (NIV)

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister^[a] sins,^[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’^[c] ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be^[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be^[e] loosed in heaven.

¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

Meditation ~ “Building Relationships” ~

The following letter appeared in newspapers:

Dear Ann Landers: You recently printed a sweet “how-we-met” story. The woman said at the end of World War II, she sat behind a soldier in church. He knew all the lyrics to the songs so she figured he couldn’t be all bad. Later, she learned he was a doctor. Three months later, she slipped on an icy walk and injured her arm. That same doctor insisted she stay in the infirmary, and he visited her twice a day. When she was discharged, he asked her to the movies to celebrate. They subsequently married in the same chapel where they had met.

Here’s how that same story would go if it happened today:

Dear Ann: Awhile ago, I attended church services and noticed that the soldier sitting behind me knew all the words to every song. I figured anyone who knew those lyrics was probably a member of the religious right. I bumped into him a month later. After cussing him out and telling him to watch where he was going, I learned he was a doctor. Three months later, I slipped on an icy walk and injured my arm. After suing the property owner for all I could get, this same doctor treated me and insisted that I stay in the infirmary. He then made twice-daily

visits to see how I was doing, which made me suspicious. I complained to his supervisor and filed a sexual harassment suit. I was discharged in January, and the doctor asked if I would like to see a movie to celebrate. I told the police he was a stalker and applied for a restraining order. When the doctor asked me to marry him in the same chapel where we first met, I called the FBI. They searched his apartment to make sure there were no shrines built to me and no bodies hidden under the floorboards. I married the guy anyway because, after all, doctors earn six-figure incomes. -- [signed] Tuned in and Turned on in La Jolla, Calif.

That letter may be a little extreme, but would you agree that something tragic has happened America, and that something has to do with human relationships? We're less trusting, more suspicious, fearful of opening ourselves to others. Some of us have no truly close friends. We're isolated and alone. We wall ourselves into gated communities, and worse yet, we don't even know the other people behind those walls, much less people outside.

Robert Putnam wrote a book which he titled *Bowling Alone*. He took his title from the fact that while more people than ever are bowling these days, fewer are doing it in leagues. There has been a steady decline of civic involvement, neighborhood relationships, and participation in volunteer and religious organizations. Putnam found that the level of community in America is at its lowest point in our lifetimes.

Therapist Will Miller also wrote a book which he titled *Refrigerator Rights*. It has a similar theme. He says we need people around us who have what he calls "refrigerator rights." This is someone who can come into our home and feel comfortable going to our refrigerator to make a sandwich without our permission. Miller argues that too many Americans suffer mentally and emotionally because they have too few of these kinds of close relationships.

He's right. Studies show that our society is suffering from our lack of involvement with one another. Not only is our society suffering, so are we as individuals.

Sometime back a team headed by a Harvard social scientist tracked the lives of 7,000 people over nine years. Here's what this team found. People with the fewest personal relationships were three times more likely to die than those with strong relational connections. Three times! In fact, people with bad health habits such as smoking, poor eating habits, obesity, or alcohol use, but who had strong social ties lived significantly longer than people who had great health habits but were isolated. In other words, as Pastor John Ortberg quips, it is better to eat Twinkies with good friends than to eat broccoli alone. Harvard researcher Robert Putnam notes that if you belong to no groups but decide to join one, "you cut your risk of dying over the next year in half."

Remember Barbra Streisand singing, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world . . ."

RELATIONSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT. You need to believe that or you cannot appreciate Jesus' words for today. Relationships matter. In fact, in the long run, the only thing that really matters in life is relationships. When life is over, everything we have in this world will disappear and decay. Only one thing will remain: relationships. This is to say we need our relationships to be strong and we want them to last. Now listen to Jesus' words: "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

This is a most interesting teaching. It begins, "If your brother sins against you . . ." Now, this doesn't mean your brother in a literal sense though it could. Has anyone ever seen a family

relationship grow strained or even break? It happens, doesn't it? My guess is that there is someone in listening to this, or reading it who hasn't spoken to at least one member of their family in several years. Someone said something catty . . . someone took a prized possession from Mom's estate without asking . . . someone borrowed money and never paid it back . . . The reasons are many and varied, but we all know families where relationships have been splintered and torn.

But Jesus isn't talking about our blood brothers or sisters. He is talking about brothers and sisters within the church community. The early church was like a family. After all most of them left everything to follow Jesus. Of course, we know that church families can be broken and filled with strife just like normal families.

I believe today that Jesus would have us interpret "brother" as anyone with whom we have a strong personal relationship.

"If your brother sins against you," says Jesus, "go and show him his fault, just between the two of you . . ."

IN OTHER WORDS, IF SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT HURTS YOU, MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO HEAL THE RELATIONSHIP AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT AT FAULT. What sound, practical advice this is. Wouldn't it be great if everyone who was estranged from a brother or sister or friend or co-worker or spouse would pick up a phone and make an appointment to sit down with that person to iron it out? Am I a dreamer? I guess so. If you think this is an easy teaching by our Lord, you have never had anyone hurt you. Feelings of betrayal, anger, hurt, bitterness, resentment can be overwhelming. Some of you have been there, haven't you? After a while, it may become a matter of pride.

Gilbert and Sullivan are two of the great names of musical theater. Their operettas have thrilled millions. But for years they were estranged from each other. Oh, they still collaborated. For years, Gilbert would send Sullivan the lyrics of the operetta they were working on by mail, and Sullivan would send Gilbert the music back by mail. But when they had an opening night, they would stand at opposite ends of the stage and bow facing forward, so that they would not ever need to look at each other. The problem was that they had a falling out over the purchase of a new carpet in one of their theaters, and they never settled that grudge.

It happens. The sad thing is that the closer the relationship, often the more intense the anger, the resentment, the bitterness. And it is very, very difficult to take the first step. Yet Jesus tells us, that is what we must do. It doesn't really matter who is at fault. All that matters is the relationship. That is particularly true in families.

Ray Bowman and his wife, Sally, tried hard to raise their children right. They loved and encouraged them, taught them solid values. But there was one son David, their youngest who nearly broke their hearts. David began using drugs at an early age. Eventually he dropped out of high school and before long he lived on the streets.

Ray dreamed that one day like the Prodigal Son in Jesus' story David would come home, and they would welcome him with open arms. It didn't happen. David stayed on the streets. Drugs ruled his life. Then one day, Ray felt God calling him to go to his son and to apologize to his son for his resentment of David's behavior. This was tough, but Ray swallowed his pride and went to his son and asked for his forgiveness. David accepted his father's apology with grace. Somehow this was the nudge that David needed. A few weeks later, David came to Christ. He left his drug addiction behind. Today, he is happily married with a fine family, and a responsible job.

Some fathers would have real trouble doing that. But in Ray's case, it worked. If a relationship is important to you, sooner or later you will need to swallow your pride, Jesus tells us, and take the first step. "If your brother sins against you," says Jesus, "go and show him his fault, just between the two of you." But listen to what he says next, "If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."

IN OTHER WORDS, SAYS JESUS, THERE MAY COME A TIME WHEN YOU HAVE TO END A RELATIONSHIP.

Barbara Brown Taylor tells a story about a woman who was already dying of cancer when her husband suddenly dropped dead of a heart attack. At his funeral people leaned over her wheelchair to console her by reminding her that it would not be long until she and her husband were together again in heaven. Later when this woman and Rev. Taylor were alone, the woman with tears running down her face looked at Taylor and said, "I'm never going to get away from him, am I?"

That story will either make you laugh or make you cry. Not every relationship can be healed. Particularly in the case of abuse, not every relationship can be healed, or even should be healed. You may have a friend who brings out the worse in you, who tears you down, who makes you question your essential self-worth. There are some relationships that should be severed.

Some relationships cannot be healed unless the other person makes some changes.

It's not an uncommon occurrence. We love Jesus' story of the prodigal son, but the prodigal has to want to come home, and sometimes that never happens. Relationships matter. If you have a relationship that has been broken and can yet be healed, you take the first step. But not every relationship can be healed.

AT SUCH TIMES WE NEED TO TURN TO OUR PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

If a relationship that is important to us cannot be healed, we need to reach out to friends, particularly friends in the church, as Christ suggests. But the most important place we will turn is to God. We may pray for God to heal the relationship. We may need to pray to God to heal us if the relationship cannot be healed, to help us to accept the inevitable and to keep us from bitterness and resentment. But even more, we pray that this experience of a broken relationship will draw us even closer to God. For it is from our relationship with God, not with another human being, that we draw our strength and our identity.



Affirmation of Faith: (Please read together in UNISON)

All: We believe in God — the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who gathers, protects and cares for the church.

We believe the church is one worldwide communion of saints, called from the entire human family.

We believe the church is the single community of believers, reconciled with God and with one another.

We believe that through the working of God's Spirit, unity is a binding force and also that we must seek this unity, which must become visible to the world.

("Affirmation" continues...)

We believe that the sin of division, separation and hatred between people and groups has been conquered by Christ.

We commit ourselves to protecting the unity of the church universal. We pledge to make this unity active in all of our words, thoughts and deeds.

Pastoral Prayer:

L: Gracious God, you have enriched and enlightened us by the revelation of your eternal Christ. Comfort us in our mortality and strengthen us to walk the path of your desire, so that by word and deed we may manifest the gracious news of your faithfulness and love.

Holy Father, Father of Christ who asked the disciples, "What are you looking for," and who offered the invitation to "Come and See," open our hearts to what you reveal and give us the courage to follow. By your Spirit aid us in our journey, so that like John, our words and deeds point to the Lamb of God. For those who are suffering, let us point to Christ through comfort. For those who are hungry, let us point to Christ through bread. For those in the grip of despair, let us point to Christ through hope. 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, Moe, Keith Berger and Shirley Galante. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter and Helen Litzenberger. We keep Linda Arnold and her family in our prayers as they grieve.

Almighty God, whose Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, is the Light of the World: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshiped and obeyed to the ends of the earth.

We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, as we continue to pray saying: Our Father, who art in heaven ...

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: 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.

* **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:

Let your lives witness to Christ's love.
Let your words bring reconciliation.
Let your thoughts be of peace.
Let your touch bring healing.
Let your actions count for justice.
Be a sign of hope and a beacon of joy.
Go and may God's blessing go with you.

Closing Hymn: #573 - "Lead on Eternal Sovereign"



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, Sept. 6th, 2020 ~ Happy Labor Day Weekend!

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!**



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.



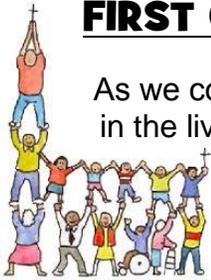
Rev. Mike is hosting a Virtual WED. EVENING BIBLE STUDY via Zoom, live at 7:00 p.m.! (NOT 7:30) can join in on the computer or on the PHONE!!! This virtual, live, group Bible Study runs from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what topics come into the conversation. You can join in on line or, you can CALL 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 Shirley Galante, Collette Andreadis, Bob Arnold Wendy Wandersee, Jeanette Orso, Sal Giamoni, Danny K, Bonnie David, Janet Kobler’s cousin Karen B, Moe & Keith Berger. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter and Helen Litzenberger, in our prayers. We offer prayers of sympathy to Linda Arnold & family and 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”](#)**.



Associate Member Rebecca Price-Janney also had a new book published, “Easton at the Pass”. She is holding a ‘virtual/mail-in’ book signing with 10% of sales going to support our Steeple Fund. Please see the info & order form at the end of this bulletin.

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 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 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 outside with bell & clock work going on inside!

Please update the announcement in Sunday's Bulletin regarding the Steeple Restoration project. We have hit another fund raising milestone of \$102,000!

A few Finial 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 our all of our Steeple Project Videos on our website or our [NEW YouTube Channel](#)!!!

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



First Church Prayer Requests ~

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



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

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

ALSO, we lift up Linda Arnold & family, the family of Megan McGinley & 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.**

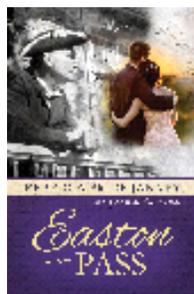
***Say your prayers, wash your hands, wear your mask &
may God’s blessings cover you & those you love!***



"Easton at the Pass" Rebecca Price Janney's Latest Novel

Who are you when things that define you suddenly change?

In this strange year, we can all relate to that! Rebecca Price Janney's newest installment in her award-winning *Easton Series*, *Easton at the Pass*, is a book for such a time as this.



Battle-weary Revolutionary War hero Peter Kichline and his remaining troops have returned to Easton, a town in upheaval, as they mend from combat and captivity. Meanwhile back to the future, Erin Miles is settling into her new life in Easton, but the ground has shifted, and the world they once knew and cherished has changed. What they counted on to define themselves and their purpose in life is gone, and they set out to discover, "Who am I now?"

Rebecca is making her book available to First Church via a sign up sheet. If you'd like her to sign a copy for you, just fill out the form below and send it, along with a **check for \$15 made out to "Rebecca Price Janney," to the office**, or give it to Pastor Mike on Sundays through **September 20th**. Rebecca will bring your signed book to the church for you to pick it up.

Ten percent of sales will go to the Steeple Fund.

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If you are **mailing** your order in, please mail to: Rebecca Price Janney
75 Pine Manor Drive,
Hellertown, PA 18055.