

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 20th Worship Video](#)

PLEASE NOTE: This is a 'DropBox' video. You may be required to log in with...

User name: Firstucc2@verizon.net ~ Password: 920video

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, September 20th, 2020 ~

~ The Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost ~



Opening Hymn: #307 ~ "Glorious Things of You Are Spoken"

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

L: I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;

P: **Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.**

L: Let us worship God.

Call to Confession: (Please read responsively)

L: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, the one who fashions us, the one who heals us, the one who reforms us again and again.

P: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin, calling for God's transforming power. (*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*)

Confession of Sin: (Spoken together, in Unison)

All: We have failed as your church, O God. You call us to live faithfully, act justly and bring peace to the earth. Instead, our lives and your church reflect more of our needs and worries and less of the needs and worries of all peoples. Move us beyond ourselves to hear the cry of the world and to respond with acts and deeds of kindness, mercy and justice. May your grace shine through a church that, even with its shortcomings, accepts the call of Christ to serve and care and love and bring peace. May we feel your forgiving spirit now. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

L: In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. In our forgiveness, may we blossom fully with purpose and resolve, so that the world will know us by our love.

Gloria Patri: (Spoken together, in Unison)

**Glory be to the Father, and
To the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be;
World with out end. Amen**

Prayer for Illumination: (Spoken together, in Unison)

All: Holy God, whose Word is a light to our paths, illumine our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit. In the reading and proclamation of your Scripture, confront us in our sin, comfort us in our sorrow, heal our wounds and inspire us to follow you. For the sake of Christ, we pray. Amen.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 20th is: Exodus 16:2-15 (NIV)

² In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. ³ The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions.⁵ On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble

against us?”⁸ Moses also said, “You will know that it was the Lord when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord.”

⁹ Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the Lord, for he has heard your grumbling.’”

¹⁰ While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud.

¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, ‘At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will be filled with bread. Then you will know that I am the Lord your God.’”

¹³ That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, “It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat.

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 20th is: Philippians 1:21-30 (NIV)

²¹ For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Life Worthy of the Gospel

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,^[a] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 20th is: Matthew 20:1-16 (NIV)

²⁰ “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ² He agreed to pay them a denarius^[a] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³ “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴ He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶ About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

⁷ “‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

⁸ “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

⁹ “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰ So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹² ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

¹³ “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ ¹⁴ Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵ Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶ “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Meditation ~ “Life’s Not Fair” ~ Matthew 20: 1-16

Some years back an anonymous dialogue circulated on the Internet. It was aimed at parents. It went like this:

Whenever your children are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God’s omnipotence did not extend to His own children. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And one of the first things God said was “DON’T!”

“Don’t what?” Adam replied.

“Don’t eat the forbidden fruit,” God said.

“Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey Eve, we have forbidden fruit!”

“No Way!” says Eve.

“Yes way!” Adam replies.

“Do NOT eat the fruit!” says God.

“Why?” Adam and Eve ask in unison.

“Because I am your Father and I said so!” God replies, wondering why He hadn’t stopped creation after making the elephants.

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break! “Didn’t I tell you not to eat the fruit?” God asked.

“Uh huh,” Adam replied.

“Then why did you?” said the Father.

“The serpent made me do it,” said Eve.

“She started it!” Adam said.

“Did not!”

“Did too!”

“DID NOT!”

Having had it with the two of them, God’s punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus the pattern was set, says this author, and it has never changed.

Now obviously none of our boys and girls act like that. “Did not!” “Did too!” “DID NOT!” “Did too!” But I have heard of families where such squabbles occur.

But there is another kind of squabble that is universal. If you’re around children very much, or if you have multiple children in your household, one declaration that you are surely going to hear sooner or later is, “That’s not fair!”

Ann Crittenden wrote a book for women considering business careers titled, *If You’ve Raised Kids, You Can Manage Anything*. In her book Crittenden says that children are hard-wired for fairness. This probably is due, she suggests, to the bad old days when parental partiality could be fatal to the less-favored child.

As an example, she tells of visiting the Galapagos Islands where she observed the parenting practices of a bird called the blue-footed booby (I’m not making this up). The blue-footed booby hatches two eggs. Then she watches these two eggs closely and observes which of the newborn chicks is the sturdiest and most likely to survive. Then she boots the other chick out of the nest to die. It appears that it was just a spare.

“Small children,” writes Ann Crittenden, “view any trace of parental favoritism with the same panic that must be felt by the luckless booby chick. Every parent has heard the anguished cries: ‘Her piece is bigger than mine!’ ‘I want one just like Johnny’s!’ ‘You love him better than me!’ Unfairness can feel like a matter of life and death and, at one time,” says Ann Crittenden, “it probably was.”

It’s the oldest contention in society, “That’s not fair.” Remember Adam and Eve’s two boys, Cain and Abel. They brought their offerings to God. For some reason, God accepted Abel’s offering, but not Cain’s. “That’s not fair,” Cain thought in his heart and his resulting anger was the source of humanity’s first murder.

We hear it not only among children, but among adults as well, “That’s not fair.” That’s one of the reasons we have lawyers and judges and, if things get out of hand, police. It’s the reason why some families are split after the reading of a will. It is why some people will always feel victimized in our society. Life isn’t fair.

I’m not going to ask if any of you have ever experienced inequality in the workplace. Would you believe that in some workplaces some people are paid more than others, even though they may actually work less?

Pastor Steve Shepherd tells about a man who owned a small farm in South Georgia. The Wage and Hour Department claimed he was not paying proper wages to his help and sent an agent to interview him. “You just give me a list of your employees,” said the agent, “and tell me how much you pay them.”

“All right,” said the farmer. “I have a hired man. Been with me for three years. I pay him \$600 a week, plus room and board. I have a cook. She’s been here six months. She gets \$500 a week plus room and board.”

“Anybody else?” asked the agent as he scribbled on a note pad.

“Yeah,” the farmer said. “There’s a half-wit here. Works about eighteen hours a day. I pay him ten dollars a week and give him chewing tobacco.”

“Aha!” the agent roared. “I want to talk to that half-wit!”

The farmer said, “You’re talking to him now.”

At every layer of society, someone is complaining, “That’s not fair.”

Jesus told a parable about a landowner who went out early in the morning, about six o’clock, to hire workers for his vineyard. This was a common practice in that part of the world, particularly during the grape harvest. Storms could easily ruin the crop and it was important to get the harvest in as quickly as possible. So for a time, anyone who wanted a job could have one. The work was hard; working hours were from dawn to sunset, which in a Mediterranean country means a twelve-hour day. The wage was a standard one, a ‘denarius’ or silver coin.

Anglican pastor Tim Chesterton makes the point that a denarius was not only the average daily wage for a worker, but it was also the average cost of surviving per day for the masses of poor families in Israel. It didn’t allow any room to maneuver. A denarius would buy your family what they needed to stay alive, no more and no less. So a day’s work and a full day’s wage were essential to survival.

During the grape harvest, men who wanted to work would go to the marketplace and stand around; it was like going to an employment center in the morning to look for a job for the day. They would work the twelve hours, and then they would be paid at the end of the day so that each man could go home with money to buy food for his family. If a man was unable to find work on a particular day, then his family would not eat. If he found work for only a part of the day, and thus was unable to earn a whole denarius, his family would eat, but not enough to stave off hunger pangs.

I hope that you will appreciate, then, what is at stake for the workers in this story. It is not only about fairness. For some of these workers, it is about survival. That helps explain some of the dynamics of the story.

The landowner went out at six o’clock in the morning to hire workers. He agreed to pay these workers the standard wage a denarius for the day.

About nine in the morning he went back to the marketplace and saw some other men standing around doing nothing. Obviously, no other jobs were available. He told them, “You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.” So they went.

He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon, the final hour of the work day, he went out and found still others standing around. He told them to work in his vineyard too.

When quitting time came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, “Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.”

The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. Can you imagine how deliriously happy these workers were? A full day's wage for only one hour of work! They would be able to feed their family. They would be able to pay their bills. Maybe they could keep the bank from foreclosing on their house. How in the world under such circumstances could they be expected to hide their joy? And that created a problem.

When those who were hired first came to be paid, and they knew how generous the landowner had been with those who had worked only an hour, they expected a huge bonus. Can you imagine their disappointment when they also received a denarius? They began to grumble. "These who were hired last worked only one hour," they said, "and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day."

But the landowner answered one of them, "I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?"

Then Jesus added these cryptic words, "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

This is a parable of the generosity of God. God pours out His grace full and completely on all who will receive it. We who have labored in the vineyard as Christians for most of our lives would like to think that we will get an extra measure of grace in return for our many years of service, but it will not happen. It cannot happen. The Father's love is without limits. He pours out His grace without reservation and without regard to who deserves it and who does not. If that bothers you, get over it.

If there are no limits on grace, if it exceeds everything we could ever hope for, everything we could ever expect, how can one person say he's got more than another?

If I have a great deal of money, I might buy a piece of property on the ocean. My piece of property might be nicer than yours. But no one can buy the whole ocean, no matter how wealthy they are.

God's grace is far greater than any ocean, any land mass, or the entire horizon as well. Do you remember the Gospel song, "The Love of God"? The third verse goes,

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;

To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky."

That's grace. And it's poured out in infinite quantities on you and on me. It is totally unearned, whether we have labored for Christ for 50 years or 50 minutes. All we have to do to receive God's grace is to open our hearts to it. To some people, it doesn't seem fair, but it is a fact. No wonder it's often called Amazing Grace.

Writer Philip Yancey tells about an incident that occurred a few years ago. Journalist Bill Moyers created a documentary based on the hymn "Amazing Grace." One of the more unusual scenes in the film took place at a massive benefit concert in England.

All day, fans had been blasted with hard-driving rock music. Strangely, the concert organizers had scheduled opera singer Jessye Norman to close the concert. Fans reacted negatively when Ms. Norman first took the stage. Here was a middle-aged black woman without any back-up band, depending completely on her voice. But she silenced the crowds with her opening line:

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!”

And soon, thousands of rock fans were singing along with this humble, life-changing hymn.

It’s been said that there are more people who know the words to “Amazing Grace” by heart than know our national anthem. That would not surprise me.

Many of you may have seen the 1998 movie *Saving Private Ryan*. *Saving Private Ryan* is about the invasion of Normandy in World War II. Pastor Ken Onstot has summed up the movie beautifully:

The movie opens with an elderly man walking through a cemetery perched above the Normandy beach where allied troops landed on D-day. He approaches a grave at the cemetery and kneels down in front of it, weeping.

“Suddenly the movie jumps back 54 years to the day of the invasion. For the next 20 minutes we watch one of the most horrifying war sequences ever filmed. Some 5,000 allied troops were killed or wounded on the beaches of Normandy that day, and it seems like the movie shows every one of them, in anguishing personal detail. Finally a beachhead is established, and for a moment the troops are safe.

“But then the real plot of the movie begins. Eight soldiers who survived the invasion are sent to rescue an American paratrooper named Ryan who was dropped behind enemy lines.

“They go through harrowing experiences to find him, and when they find him several men lose their lives trying to rescue him and get him out. The last one killed is the captain of the unit played by Tom Hanks. As he dies, he says to Private Ryan, ‘Earn this.’

“At that moment the movie switches back to the gray haired man at the cemetery, and we realize that we are looking at Private Ryan, now in his 70s. He is kneeling before the grave of the captain. Slowly he stands up, turns to his wife, and says, ‘Tell me I’ve been a good person.’

“His wife is puzzled. She does not understand the question, but we who have been watching the movie understand it completely. He is asking her, ‘Tell me that my life has been worth saving. Tell me that I have fulfilled the purpose for which the captain gave his life.’”

That’s how many of us feel about our lives. We know that God’s grace is free. We know that we did nothing to deserve it. But we also know it cost Christ his life. And we hunger in our hearts to think that our lives lived in response to his act of self-giving love are proving worthy of that act. What kind of people would we be otherwise?

Amazing grace. It’s not fair. It’s not just. It’s simply unbelievably generous. And it is all ours for the taking today. Amen.



Affirmation of Faith: (Please read responsively)

L: Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal, whose holy faith lets us now declare:

P: **We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children's good.**

We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth. Amen.

—*United Methodist Hymnal 885.*

Pastoral Prayer:

L: As we enter this time of prayer, O God, we offer our gratitude that you are always present to us. Instill in us a desire to listen to others. Help us listen with open hearts and open minds, that people might feel safe in our presence. Instill in us a spirit of serenity that others might feel accepted in your nonjudgmental grace. Free us from the tendency to label people and ideas and allow us instead to lean into mercy and kindness. In the stillness of these moments, we acknowledge the times when we have been less than kind, merciful and open. Thank you for never banning us from your presence, loving God; help us so to love and accept others. We pray for continued healing for Collette Andreadis, Jeanette Orso, Sal Giamoni, Danny K, Bonnie David, Janet Kobler's cousin Karen B, Keith Berger, Shirley Galante. We remember Linda Arnold and ask that you be present with her in her grief. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter and Helen Litzenberger. Amen.

Lord's Prayer: (Please read together in Unison)

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

Prayer of Dedication: (Please read together in Unison)

All: We thank you, loving God, for the abundance of your gifts poured out upon us, and we ask that you use our gifts and offerings to spread healing and hope throughout the world, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

* **DOXOLOGY** (SPOKEN in Unison)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host:
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Benediction:

~ based on Romans 8:38-39

We stand firm in the conviction that neither death nor life, neither the present nor the future, not even anything the enemy might bring upon us, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Closing Hymn: #43 - "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"



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. 20th, 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.



FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY - The single yellow rose on the altar is from Naomi Protyniak, in beloved memory of Megan McGinley, in honor of her birthday on Saturday, from her loving Nanny.

The altar flowers are from David and Wendy Wandersee, in celebration of their first attendance of First Church in September, 1997, and in remembrance of Megan McGinley, with our love.



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.**



RUMMAGE UPDATE!!! PLEASE NOTE...

We are NOT able to accept any more Rummage at this time!

We have rooms full & the next opportunity for a sale is not until the Spring of 2021 & we are already out of room! So please hold on to any future donations until we have a definite date & can find more room.



FIRST CHURCH FAMILY NEWS! ...



As we continue in this “state of limbo”, we would like to make note of some of the events in the lives of our First Church Family. IF YOU have family news to share, especially if we missed it, please e-mail or call the office to let us know & we will post it in our next “Mini-Bulletin”. *[Please note: Apologies for missing events that would normally have been shared in our monthly “Steeple News”.]*



KEEP IN PRAYER... Please keep 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 the family of Joshua Fulmer, to Linda Arnold & family and to Megan McGinley’s family.

Lord, we pray for the people of California & the western United States who are engulfed in wild fires & smoke. Give them peace & strength. We pray for You to watch over all the smoke jumpers, firefighters, rescue workers, shelter workers, volunteers & neighbors as they all try to help each other.

Lord, we pray for the people of Beirut, for the families of those who were lost, for those who are injured, for the thousands of people who are now homeless in that already hurting land. Help the rest of us to see a way to help them.

“Church Family News” continues...)

Also, please thank God for keeping all of the painting technicians, electricians, bell/chime/clock technicians & all who helped restore our beautiful steeple, safe as they worked at such heights, inside & out.



LOVING THANKS... Thank you to all my church family for your kind thoughts and expressions of sympathy in the loss of my dad. They certainly lifted my family and me at a sad time.
~ Linda Arnold



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. **TODAY IS THE DEADLINE TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!**



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.



'Steeple Restoration ~

We held our STEEPLE LIGHTING CEREMONY & CELEBRATION last night! We thank you all for your support (financial & emotional). Please watch our next Steeple News & our media pages (Facebook, website, etc.) for updated info about the project. Again, we say THANK YOU!!!

~ Doreen Arnold, Steeple Project Chair

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

We have set up a YouTube channel for the church to post videos of our Restoration progress.

You can find our YouTube channel by 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 California & the western United States who are engulfed in wild fires & smoke. Give them peace & strength. We pray for You to watch over all the smoke jumpers, firefighters, rescue workers, shelter workers, volunteers & neighbors as they all try to help each other.

Lord, we pray for the people of Beirut, for the families of those who were lost, for those who are injured, for the thousands of people who are now homeless in that already hurting land. Help the rest of us to see a way to help them.

Please keep these folks in your prayers... 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, Jailien, Jessica, Rose, Twanda, Wendy, Nancy, Natasha & all officers & prisoners at NC Prison.

ALSO, we lift up the family of Joshua Fulmer, 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!***



Today is the Deadline to Order!

"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.

----- Please cut here -----

Name: _____

No of Copies: _____

Please Inscribe the Book to: _____

Address if you want the book mailed: _____

(Add \$2.50 for postage)

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