

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 27th Worship Video](#)

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 27th, 2020 ~

~ The Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost ~



Opening Hymn: #303 ~ "Rejoice, Give Thanks and Sing"

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

L: We are children of God,

P: As brilliant as a shining star,

L: As wondrous as an ocean wave,

P: As special as each fragrant rose,

("Call To Worship" continues...)

L: As unique as each falling leaf.
P: We are God's children,
L: United in praise, humbled in awe
P: And prompted to sing.

Call to Confession:

L: As we contemplate the words of this hymn, let us bow before our holy and loving God, confessing our sins with honesty and faith.

*I need Thee every hour, Stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their power, When Thou art nigh.
I need Thee, O I need Thee; Every hour I need Thee!
O bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.*

Confession of Sin: (Spoken together, in Unison)

**All: Holy God, you see into our hearts. You see the true selves we try to hide from others, the sins we fear would destroy our images, the evils that lurk so deep within us we can scarcely name them, the unholy habits that have been with us so long that they no longer prick our consciences.
But you also see in us Jesus Christ, the Holy One who took on our sin and covers us in his righteousness. Forgive us for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

Assurance of Pardon:

L: On mountaintops and in valleys, in our homes and in our hearts, God knows us better than we know ourselves, and God forgives us when we cannot forgive ourselves. By God's mercy, we are forgiven; by God's mercy, we are made whole; by God's mercy, we are equipped to serve others. Thanks be to God. Amen.

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: 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.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 27th is: Exodus 17:1-7 (NIV)

17 The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ² So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the Lord to the test?"

³ But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

⁴ Then Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

⁵ The Lord answered Moses, “Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶ I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷ And he called the place Massah^[a] and Meribah^[b] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the Lord saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 27th is: Philippians 2:1-13 (NIV)

² Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

¹² Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Sept. 27th is: Matthew 21:23-32 (NIV)

²³ Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

²⁴ Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵ John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’”²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

²⁸ “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

²⁹ “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰ “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

³¹ “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.”³² For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him

Meditation ~ “OK Boomer!”

OK boomers, we’ve got some things we need to talk about today. Most of us are Boomers, including me. To qualify as a boomer, you had to be born between 1946 and 1965.

Now what do we mean by “OK boomer?” According to Wikipedia, “OK boomer” is a phrase used by younger people to dismiss or mock attitudes stereotypically attributed to the baby boomer generation. It is considered by some to be disrespectful and ageist. So, for example, if someone hears one of us criticizing a millennial, a young person born between 1981 and 1996—not that that has ever happened—they might say, “OK boomer” to indicate, perhaps, they think we are being unfair. It depends how it’s said, of course. It can be sarcastic or accusing tone that is somewhat malicious or it can be a congenial tone that indicates it is being said in jest.

Unfortunately, sometimes it is said disrespectfully in the workplace and at home. For example, if they were asked to do something unpleasant, they might answer, “OK Boomer,” as if the task were beneath them. Fortunately, the OK Boomer response is a fad that has already begun to fade. The truth is, however, that every generation has been critical of generations before and after them.

However, I thought of that expression, OK Boomer, when I read the story that Jesus told about a man who had two sons. The man went to the first one and said, “Son, I want you to work in the vineyard today.” The son was in a somewhat rebellious mood and with a thick tone of sarcasm he answered the older man, “OK Boomer.”

Of course, that is not how he answered; he did worse than that. With defiance he answered, “I will not!” I know what would have happened to me if I had answered my father like that—

but that's what this boy did. Afterwards, however, he regretted how he answered his father and he went to the vineyard and did what his father requested.

Then the father went to the second son and made the same request of him. The second son replied somewhat indifferently, "OK Boomer." No, that is not what he said either. He also said something worse. He said, "I will, sir." Why is that worse? It's worse because he never did what his father requested. He was polite. The problem is he never went to the vineyard.

"Now," asked Jesus, "Which son did the will of his father"—the defiant son who said he wouldn't work but did, or the polite one who said he would work, but didn't? You can't always judge character by good manners, can you? Many people have been misjudged based on their etiquette.

In this parable we see two types of persons. **The response of the first son was defiance.** "No, I won't go. How dare you ask me to do that! You know I have plans with my friends."

Many parents have encountered that kind of response at some time or another. Some folks whether young or old have a stubborn streak in them that causes them to rebel no matter how harmless the request. Do you know anyone like that?

Former competitive swimmer and nine-time Olympic champion Mark Spitz might have had a touch of that stubbornness. Spitz, you may remember, won seven gold medals at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, all in world record time. This was an achievement that lasted for 36 years until it was surpassed by Michael Phelps, who won eight gold medals at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

Some of you may also remember that, when other swimmers were shaving their body hair, Spitz swam with a moustache. When asked why he grew a moustache Spitz stated, "I grew the moustache because a coach in college said I couldn't grow one." Did you ever know someone like that—who did things just because they were told not to do them? Was that you?

Spitz said he originally grew the moustache as a form of rebellion against the clean-cut look imposed on him in college. "It took a long time to grow," he said, but he grew to take pride in his moustache.

A coach of the Soviet Union team once asked Mark Spitz whether having a moustache in the pool slowed him down. Spitz replied in jest that no, *in fact*, he said, it deflected water from his mouth, which made him even faster. Then he added that this was the actual reason he was such a terrific swimmer—his moustache. Spitz was just joking, but the Soviet coach took him seriously. The following year, the entire Soviet team grew moustaches. All because a coach told Mark Spitz he couldn't have one.

Maybe you have a member of your family who has a little streak of stubbornness in them? We all know people whose first response to anything is always "No!" Fortunately, many of these somewhat ornery people have good hearts, and if they have time to reconsider and see the worth of a project, they will eventually pitch in and be among the best workers. That was the first son in this parable that Jesus told. He was initially defiant, but after reflecting on his father's request, he changed his mind, put on his work clothes and went out into the vineyard.

Though he was quite polite, the response of the second son was much worse than his older brother's defiance; his response was insincere. The second son was like many of us. There are many people who are nice, friendly, basically Christian people who will never

argue when asked to do something, never even protest, and yet getting them to do anything is a near impossibility.

I remember when I was first appointed the Lehigh Northampton Airport Authority it was, at that time, a prestigious, no work Authority. Many folks wanted to serve, you met for dinner, the meetings last an hour and you went home. When things got tough, there were lawsuits, money was tight and hard decisions had to be made. The press called for comments, many dropped away; we reduced the authority from 25 to 15 hard working volunteers.

The younger son said he would work in the vineyard, but he never did.

Of course, Jesus wasn't interested in giving us a lesson in family life. He was talking about what it means to follow him. And what it means is this—it's time to get into action. It's time to put on our work clothes and to get out into the vineyard. It's not enough to be a nice, polite person. There are already too many nice, polite people who never get out into the vineyard.

The Good Samaritan was not "good" because he had good manners and studied his Sunday school lesson, as important as these practices are. Jesus called him good because he saw a stranger in need and went to his aid.

The Rich Young Ruler missed out on the kingdom not because he was immoral. He testified that he had kept the commandments from the time he was a lad—and he had. He missed the kingdom not because he was immoral but because he was not willing to give his possessions to the poor and follow Jesus.

The man who built his life on a rock was praised not because he had the right theology, but because, as Jesus said, "He hears my words and does them" (Matthew 7:24).

"Hearing" is important, and that's one of the reasons I'm in the pulpit each Sunday, but hearing is in vain without "doing." Believing is important, but as the Scriptures tell us "even the demons believe, and tremble." As the epistle of James puts it so clearly, "Faith without works is dead" (2:17).

No matter how spiritual we may seem to be, if we are not willing to minister to the needs of persons around us, we are no better than the rich man at whose gate sat the beggar Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31). The rich man didn't abuse Lazarus in any way as far as we know. What was the sin that caused him after his death to wake up in torment in Hades? This is that awful sin—he walked right by Lazarus every morning and never saw him. He ignored Lazarus living in misery at his own gate and did nothing.

This is what St. Paul meant when he said, "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing . . ." (I Cor. 13:2)

A close reading of the Gospels will reveal that Jesus intended his followers to get into action serving the world as he served the world. I don't mean that He wanted us to keep busy just for the sake of keeping busy. He wants us to be busy living out our faith and bringing people closer to the kingdom of God.

He simply meant for us to give witness to our inner experience of his presence in our lives through outward service.

During the Revolutionary War a young man is reported to have come to George Washington and said: "General Washington, I want you to know that I believe in you and your cause. I fully support you."

Washington graciously thanked him and asked the young man, “What regiment are you in? Under whose command do you serve? What uniform do you wear?”

The young man answered, “Oh, I’m not in the army. I’m just a civilian.”

The general replied, “Young man, if you believe in me and my cause, then you join the army. You put on a uniform. You get yourself a rifle and you fight.”

That is Christ’s summons to us. We have not been called to be pious saints sitting in the corner with hands folded in complacent contemplation. We are called to be soldiers in the army of Christ. If we believe in him and the cause for which he died, then we are called to take up his cross and walk in his footsteps doing those good things that he would do if he were with us in the flesh today.

Now you may be thinking, “I get it, Mike. I’m supposed to go out and work in the vineyard. I’m supposed to follow Jesus more closely. I’m supposed to serve others as he did. I really have good intentions, but where does the power come from to enable a person to make that kind of commitment to serve Christ?” **The power to make that kind of change in our lives comes from Christ alone.**

None of us has the power to fulfill Christ’s call on our own. There’s not a person in this room who does not have good intentions about being a better person, but the desire to accomplish that goal is not enough. We must see ourselves in this story of the two sons who were asked by their father to go into the vineyard and ask which of the two brothers we more resemble—the one who rebelled at first, but finally did his father’s work, or the son who said, “Sure, I’ll go,” but never did. Then we must ask God for the courage and the commitment to leave our comfort zone and to seek to more closely walk in the steps of the Master.

Dr. Mickey Anders tells about a country song by Keni Thomas titled, “Not Me” that speaks to the resistance that many of us exhibit.

The first verse of the song says volunteers are needed for the children’s baseball team, and every dad is thinking, “Not me.”

And the song says, “this league is built on coaches who stood right there and said, ‘Not me, not me, no way. With this job of mine I could never find the time. Not me. Not me.’”

And the chorus says, “The world becomes a better place when someone stands and leads the way. Steps forward when they’d rather say, ‘Not me.’”

The second verse talks about a family of children whose parents have died. There is no next of kin, so the lot falls to the oldest sister who said, “I’ll raise them’ while a voice inside her screamed, ‘Not me. Not me. I can’t believe what’s happening. This isn’t how it’s supposed to be. Not me. Not me.’”

And the chorus adds, “The world becomes a better place when someone stands and leads the way. Steps forward when they’d rather say, ‘Not me.’”

The world is a better place because of the contributions of a host of persons who at first said, “Not me,” but eventually did what God called them to do.

Listen very carefully to the voice of Christ this morning. Is there something that he has been asking you to do—something here in the church, something in your neighborhood, something in your family—but you have been saying, “Not me.” Isn’t it time for you to join the older son, put on your work clothes and get into the vineyard?



Affirmation of Faith: (Spoken together, in Unison)

**All: We believe these “foolish” mysteries of God’s kingdom:
that those who want to save their life will lose it,
and those who lose their life for Christ’s sake will save it;
that some are last who will be first,
and some are first who will be last;
that we should love our enemies
and pray for those who persecute us;
that Christ’s power is made perfect in our weakness.**

We believe that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world.

**We believe and proclaim Christ crucified,
a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others,
but to those who believe, the power and wisdom of God.**

**We believe that God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom,
and that God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.**

—Based in part on 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.

Pastoral Prayer:

L: We confess it is not always easy to walk humbly, O God. We tend to be smug and gloat with undue pride instead of praising you for helping us with our accomplishments. We tend to accept all the credit even when others helped us reach our goal. How often we entreat others to show us mercy, and then how often we fail to extend the mercy of your love to the ones who need it the most. We demand the benefit of the doubt for ourselves and yet we fail to offer the wideness of your mercy for others. How easily we dwell on our misfortunes instead of focusing our attention on others and their difficulties. Why do we find it so hard to extend to others kindness and love? 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 David Freytag. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter and Helen Litzenberger Naomi Protyniak.

Grant us the wisdom, we pray, to give as we would like to receive, and the grace to walk humbly with you. 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 God, Jesus promised his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit, a gift that remains as powerful and transformative today as it was on the first Pentecost. With generous and thankful hearts, we offer our gifts to you — our time, treasure and talent, but most of all, our hearts. Use us and these offerings for your purposes and glory. 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 us rejoice at being servants of God — summoned by the Spirit, called into community, led by faith, inspired for service, and in all things, consumed by joy. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Amen.

Closing Hymn: #307 - "Glorious Things of You Are Spoken"



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. 27th, 2020 ~

No matter who you are, or where you are on your life's journey, you're welcome here. Join us in celebrating First UCC's respect for the past and faith in the future.



PLEASE NOTE: Hospitals no longer notify the church or the pastor unless you SPECIFICALLY REQUEST IT. So please, if you or a family member is hospitalized, let us know by calling the office at 610-258-3361! Please see our prayer list below.



OR by calling or texting Rev. Mike directly on his cell phone at 610-216-5471.



IMPORTANT FIRST CHURCH NOTES...

Rev. Dowd & our First Church leadership will continue to monitor the ongoing Corona virus situation. We will be especially mindful of the most vulnerable members of our First Church Family & make decisions accordingly.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY! We will continue to meet on an ongoing basis to discuss how things are working. We will share information on these decisions as they are made. **HOWEVER, we do plan to CONTINUE to offer a video Worship service for those who are unable or uncomfortable attending 'in person' worship or for anyone who would like to join us via the internet!**



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.



NEXT SUN, OCT. 4th is World Wide Communion, Neighbors In Need & Food Bank Sunday! Please join us as we share the Sacrament of Holy Communion in a no-contact way, together & please use the enclosed NIN envelope for your donations!



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 David Freytag, 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 Naomi Schleicher, the family of Joshua Fulmer, to Linda Arnold & family and to Megan McGinley’s family.

“Church Family News” continues...)

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.

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.



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”.



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 ~

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., David F., 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 Naomi Schleicher, 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!***

