

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...

[OCTOBER 25th 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

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~ Sunday, October 25th, 2020 ~

~ The Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost ~



OPENING HYMN: ~ "Take My Life, God, Let It Be"

CALL TO WORSHIP: (Please read responsively – L = Leader, P = People)

L: I will always bless the Lord; God's praise shall continually be in my mouth.

P: **My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.**

("Call To Worship" continues...)

L: O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt God's name together.

P: I sought the Lord, who answered me and delivered me from all my fears.

L: O taste and see that the Lord is good;

P: Happy are those who take refuge in God.

— *From Psalm 34*

CALL TO CONFESSION:

L: We do not stop enough to listen to the still-speaking God. And like the people of Jerusalem long ago, we often misunderstand the Spirit's movement among us. In the silence and stillness of this moment, let us draw near to God and listen. [*silence*] Let us confess together:

CONFESSION OF SIN: (Spoken together, in Unison)

All: Spirit of God, you come to us as a powerful wind — but we have shut the door and bolted it, to try to keep you out.

You descend on us as tongues of fire — but we run away, afraid of being consumed.

You give us gifts beyond our ability — but we squander them, we hide them, we say, “Not today,” or “How can one person make a difference?” or “No, Lord, not me.”

On this Lord's day, forgive our feebleness. Break open the doors of resistance. Let the fire of your Spirit dance within each of us. And give us courage and faith to claim your call for our lives.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

L: Hear the good news! God's Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh, and we have been made one. We are no longer scattered or divided, but gathered together to build up the kingdom on this earth. 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= Leader, P=People of the Congregation)

L: Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,

P: and I will observe it to the end.

L: Give me understanding of your law,

P: that I may observe it with my whole heart.

L: Lead me in the path of your commandments,

P: for I delight in it.

~ *Psalm 119:33-35*

HOLY SCRIPTURES

Our Old Testament Lesson for Sunday, Oct. 25th is: Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (NIV)

The Death of Moses

34 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, **2** all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea, **3** the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. **4** Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it.”

5 And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. **6** He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. **7** Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. **8** The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.

9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the Lord had commanded Moses.

10 Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, **11** who did all those signs and wonders the Lord sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. **12** For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Our Epistle Lesson for Sunday, Oct. 25th is: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 (NIV)

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. **2** We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. **3** For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. **4** On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. **5** You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. **6** We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. **7** Instead, we were like young children^[a] among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, **8** so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

Our Gospel Lesson for Sunday, Oct. 25th is: Matthew 22:34-46 (NIV)

The Greatest Commandment

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

“The son of David,” they replied.

⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,

⁴⁴ “The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.”

⁴⁵ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

MEDITATION ~ “Tasting the Gruel of Life”

Charles Colson seemed to be a despicable man when he served as the hatchet man for President Richard Nixon. During that period of his life, he seemed to be a man without a conscience. Then, quite remarkably, Chuck Colson had a thorough and complete conversion experience. It was in 1973 during the height of the Watergate proceedings. This was no ploy to keep Colson out of jail. In fact, he refused a plea bargain and pleaded guilty to a crime no one knew he had committed. Judge John Sirica subsequently sentenced Colson to the maximum prison term permitted under federal law.

After his release from prison, Colson founded the Prison Fellowship Ministry, which reaches out to men and women in prisons throughout the world. There were those who were suspicious of Colson’s commitment to Christ, but over the thirty plus years after his release, Colson gave the royalties from all his speeches, books and awards to the Prison Fellowship Ministry. This includes the prestigious \$1 million Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion as well as the royalties from the sale of five million copies of his twenty-three books.

In Colson’s books, he often wrote about his experiences in prisons. Some of these stories tug strongly at the heart. For example, in his book, *Being The Body*, Colson wrote about the time he and a close friend, businessman and philanthropist Jack Eckerd visited a women’s prison in Russia. All the inmates, says Colson, were dressed in threadbare babushkas and ragged long dresses. The cell-blocks were freezing and full of mud. Colson and Eckerd were able to talk with many of the women, including several who spoke English.

When they arrived at the mess hall, however, with its long rows of wooden tables and its dirty floor, they noticed that none of the inmates looked up. They had been trained to keep their eyes down. It was a very controlled and intimidating atmosphere.

But Jack Eckerd did something the Russian handlers hadn’t planned on. Colson described Eckerd, who since died, as a tall, lanky, irrepressible lion of a man who loved Christ and was not intimidated by anybody. Eckerd walked over to where the cooks were ladling out the food. It was a grayish-green stew dumped over a scoop of rice. It smelled dreadful.

Jack Eckerd, whose family owned the Eckerd Drug chain and could afford any pleasure he desired, leaned down, smiled broadly, and asked the server, “So! How’s the food in here?”

“Oh, no,” Colson thought, “She’s going to offer us some. And we’re going to have to eat it.”

Colson's doctor had told him to avoid foods of unknown origins on that trip. And this prison gruel was definitely unknown. The chunks sticking out of it looked like no animal Colson was acquainted with.

Colson writes, "The next thing I knew, my fears came true. The woman heaped a huge serving onto a plate for Jack . . . and then smiled and ladled an even bigger portion for me. I did the only thing any of us would have done in those circumstances," says Colson. "I thanked her. Then Jack and I walked over to one of the wooden tables and joined the inmates there. (The government officials all stood back, stunned. None of them touched the food.)" Eckerd and Colson bowed their heads and prayed. Colson said it was the most fervent grace he had ever uttered in his life. He asked God to sanctify that food and save him from every microbe lurking within it.

"The moment we started to eat," Colson goes on to report, "the atmosphere in that dismal prison dining hall was transformed. Inmates got up from other tables and joined us. People laughed and spoke with us. Some of the women showed us the crosses that they wore around their necks. Even the ones who did not speak English knew that because we were eating their food, breaking bread with them, we were one with them."

Chuck Colson and Jack Eckerd gave the women in that prison a very special gift that day. They identified with them. They entered their experience and connected with them.

Today we want to deal with the nature of love. Not the love that popular song writers extol, the love which the Greeks called eros. But true love, agape love the love that comes from God. I believe this love has something to do with the willingness to eat gruel served in the primitive conditions of a Russian prison.

The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees reaches its pinnacle in Matthew 22. Last week we discussed the Pharisees trick question about paying taxes. We said it was a loaded question and Jesus handled it so very well. We know Jesus' answer by heart: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

That same day the Sadducees, who didn't even believe in life after death, asked him another loaded question. It was about a woman who married seven brothers, each one dying not long after the wedding. [Jerusalem C.S.I. is investigating her as a possible serial killer, I understand. Just kidding. But seven husbands dying in a row? It's suspicious.] The Sadducees posed this question. "At the resurrection," they asked, "whose wife will she be of the seven since all of them were married to her?"

Jesus answered by saying that there is no marriage in heaven, so the question is moot. Again, Jesus passed the test. This brings us to today's lesson from this same chapter.

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together again. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" And you know his answer. Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

The perfect answer. Christ's answer. What is it that matters most in life? Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as much as you love yourself. Nothing could be simpler than that unless you ask the question, what does it mean to love? And here we can only turn to the example of Christ.

Christ cared enough to come into our world. Let's start there. Christ loved us enough to come into our world. Just as Chuck Colson and Jack Eckerd cared enough to go into the dirt and despair of a Russian prison and even eat the prison gruel, Christ cared enough to come into the dirt and despair of our lives. That's what love does.

Rev. Susan Gilbert Zencka tells about a good friend of hers who died from Hodgkin's disease. Kim left two young children. At Kim's wake, the six-year-old, Brian, was inconsolable. He sobbed and sobbed, his whole body shaking with the force of his grief. Everyone there wished there was something they could do, but how do you cheer up a little boy who knows he has lost his mom? Everyone ached for him. His dad tried to calm him down, but when he held him, Brian's grief just rocked them both. His aunt came over and tried to talk with him, but Brian was unreachable. His loss was overwhelming. He was sobbing with hurt.

Quietly, two of his friends, two little six-year-olds who had been in school with him since they had all been three, walked over and stood on either side of Brian. No one told them to go to him, and no one told them what to do. They just stood there with him, and one of them put his hand on Brian's shoulder. Brian looked up and saw them, and kept crying. But they stayed there with him. They didn't talk to him, they didn't try to cheer him up, says Rev. Zencka, they just stood by him, willing to stand in his pain and be there for him. Slowly, his weeping tapered off, and before long the boys were scampering around the funeral home, chasing each other and giggling. Every so often, Brian would come back to the front of the room and sit by his mom's casket, and cry, and the other boys would stand with him quietly and wait with him.

That's what love does. If you're asking how you can show your love for God and your neighbor, find someone who is in pain and go to them. Stand with them. Minister to them. God is probably not asking you to go to Africa or Asia to show your love. But God may be asking you to go next door. Or down the street. Or to a different part of the city. Christ cared enough to come into our world.

Even more impressively, Christ cared for the undeserving. That's you and me. Many people today only want to help people who they deem worthy of such help. "They made choices just like I did," these well-meaning people complain. "I'm not obligated to care for people who refuse to care for themselves." And, as the world sees it, that's true. Fortunately, Christ didn't see it that way. St. Paul writes in Romans 5: 6-8, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ gave himself for the undeserving.

In a sermon on the Internet, Pastor Len Niehoff, tells about a man who reached out to someone most of us would agree did not deserve his help. The man who reached out was named Louis Saunders. "He was not a rock star or a political leader or some other sort of celebrity," says Niehoff. "He was just a Disciples of Christ minister who lived quietly and served as a pastor in Texas. But when he died in 1998 a long memorial to him appeared in The New York Times because of a single act of love he performed . . .

"Saunders was serving at a church in Fort Worth when he learned that Lee Harvey Oswald the man who had assassinated President Kennedy and who had, in turn, been killed by Jack Ruby was going to be buried in his town. Saunders knew that Oswald's mother was a Lutheran, so he worked the phones and arranged for two Lutheran ministers he knew to

conduct the service. Everything was put in place and, when the day arrived, Saunders stopped by the cemetery to observe.

“When he got there, Saunders discovered that the ministers had backed out; they objected to the open-air ceremony, fearing they would be exposed to potential snipers. The small, forlorn, and impoverished Oswald family asked Saunders to fill in, so he did. He’d left his Bible in his car, but he knew some of it by heart; so from memory he recited the twenty-third Psalm and a passage from the Gospel of John. And he said this: ‘Mrs. Oswald tells me that her son, Lee Harvey, was a good boy and that she loved him. And today, Lord, we commit his spirit to your divine care.’”

Len Niehoff adds this commentary to this news story, “I think it is fair to say that on that date in this country there was no more hated person than Lee Harvey Oswald. No one had anything to say about him that allowed any room for grace or redemption. No one, that is, except his mother and Rev. Saunders.” And, of course, God. Christ cared enough to come into our world. Christ cared for the undeserving.

Christ kept his focus on that which is eternal. He was tempted just as we are tempted to live a mediocre life focused on his own pleasures and well-being. But he knew that he had a mission and a purpose to love God and his neighbor with all his heart, soul and mind.

When Christ said, “Love the Lord with ALL your heart The word Christ uses for “all” [holos] means complete (perfect) in every way. One definition is “unawares.” In other words, we are to love to the point that even our random thoughts or daydreams become filled with thoughts about God. As one scholar explains it, “this is holos: All; the position that God wants in our life. Not for His sake, but for our own. In essence, this means every feeling, thought and even our passion must be focused on Him.” We focus our thoughts on God; we focus our acts of service on those around us.

Years ago, Roger Kahn wrote a book about the old Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team, titled The Boys of Summer. Kahn tracked down many of the players of that team to see what they were doing twenty years later.

One story is about Clem Levine, the great relief pitcher. Levine lived for the team. He was the first to arrive at every game and the last to leave. He took no time for his family, particularly his young son. After Levine’s retirement from baseball, Kahn quotes him as saying, “My son has no time for me.” When Kahn tracked him down he was a disillusioned and unhappy man.

Another member of the team was Carl Erskine, also a great pitcher. Baseball did not dominate Erskine’s life in the same way as it did Levine. He had a son who was mentally challenged. His son needed him, and Erskine did all he could to care for his son. Twenty years later Carl Erskine was a fulfilled person. He knew what was important and that is where he focused his life.

This is love, agape love, love that is willing to taste the gruel of life. It is also the love that brings lasting joy and peace. It is love following the example of Christ. Christ cared enough to come into our world. Christ cared even for the undeserving. Christ was focused on that which really mattered, that which was eternal. Rocks aren’t eternal. Even diamonds aren’t eternal. Only people are eternal. That is why, when Christ was asked which commandment is most important, he replied, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”



AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: (Spoken together, in Unison) —*Based in part on 1 Corinthians 1:18-31.*

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.

PASTORAL PRAYER:

L: Good and merciful God, your gifts to us are deep and wide and unfathomable. The gift of unconditional love, exemplified by a cruel cross and an empty tomb, is a gift that we cannot fully understand and can only partially appropriate in our lives. Yet, it is the gift that draws us to serve both you and one another; that calls us to live selflessly rather than selfishly; that motivates us to live for the kingdom of God rather than for the kingdoms of this earth. You have given us much, for you have given us the gospel, and we are sobered by the responsibility to share your message of peace, hope, joy and love to a world that is hurting and in need. We pray for those today for whom life is a struggle. We pray for continued healing for all Covid victims, Collette Andreadis, for Jeanette Orso, Danny K., Bonnie David, Karen B., Keith Berger, Shirley Galante, David Freytag and for George Smith. We remember Marjorie Harron, Helena Rapp, Phyllis Rush, Evelyn Ritter, Helen Litzenberger and Naomi Protyniak. May we reach out to them as the hands and feet of Christ, for that is what you would have us do. 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: 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:

L: We are called to be witnesses to God's glory. God urges us, encourages us, pleads with us to take this call seriously — to live a life worthy of God. Jesus is our model and ideal, and our savior and hope. When we fall short, it is the Spirit who supplies all our needs. Let us go from this place, committed to be witnesses to God, disciples of Christ and a community of the Spirit, through the power of the triune God. Amen.

Closing Hymn: "The God of Abraham Praise"



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, October 25th, 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.



TODAY is the LAST SUNDAY we will collect our special Neighbors In Need offering.



Rev. Mike is hosting a Virtual WED. EVENING BIBLE STUDY via Zoom, live at 7:00 p.m.! (NOT 7:30) can join in on the computer or on the PHONE!!! This virtual, live, group Bible Study runs from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on what topics come into the conversation. You can join in on line or, you can CALL IN & be a part of the group on the phone! Please e-mail Rev. Mike or the Church Office (firstucc2@verizon.net) if you are interested, he will send you the link/info to join.



THIS SAT. NIGHT (Halloween), OCT. 31st Don't forget to "FALL BACK" & turn your clocks BACK 1 hour before you go to bed. Daylight Savings time ends!



NEXT SUN. is ALL SAINTS SUN. & we will celebrate by safely sharing the Sacrament of Holy Communion together at our 10 a.m. Worship service. It is also Food Bank Sun. & we are accepting monetary donations to help support the much needed Food Pantry at ProJeCt of Easton.



"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.



MEN'S CLUB FUND RAISER ~ The Men's Club will hold a Shammy Shine Car Wash Gift Card fundraiser once again this year. This fundraiser will start in October and run through the end of November. These gift cards make great Stocking Stuffers! Cards will be available in denominations of \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.



OCTOBER SCHOOL SUPPLY PROJECT! We are partnering with some of our 'Sister Churches' to collect funds through the month of Oct., for bulk purchase of school supplies for our EASD. **There is a basket in the Narthex for your monetary donations, TODAY IS THE DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS.**



DON'T FORGET , THIS TUES. by 5 p.m. is the last day to submit application for Absentee/Mail In ballots in PA.



Also, IF you received a mail-in ballot, please carefully follow all the directions while filling it out & preparing to return it!



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 George Smith, David Freytag, Shirley Galante, Collette Andreadis, Wendy Wandersee, Jeanette Orso, Joe K., 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 Ashton Family, the family of Naomi Schleicher, the family of Joshua Fulmer 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.

Lord, we pray for this whole world as we battle to overcome the Covid-19 virus & all who are affected.



Stewardship Note ~

Stewardship Campaign....

Our Annual Stewardship campaign has begun. The mailing should arrive over the next week. To help us plan for our 2021 budget, **please complete the enclosed pledge card and return it by Sunday, November 8th.** Then, join us on Sunday, December 6th, to review and approve the Budget. Thank you in advance for supporting the financial needs of **your** church.



Your Stewardship Committee

A Reminder... 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 ~

My sincere thanks again to the incredible members of the Steeple Committee for this significant accomplishment .An awesome night and a dream come true after 3 years of planning.

There remain a few outstanding items that are currently being addressed. Also, in addition to the original scope of work, we plan to schedule Bennett Painting to repair and paint the damaged weathervane on top of the spire. This is being scheduled over the next couple of weeks.

Thank you again for your support!

Doreen Arnold - 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, **the President, Mrs. Trump, Hope Hicks & their staff, families & 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 G., Bob L., Chris, Colette A., Danny K., David F., Debbie S. & Family, Deacon Anthony Koury, Doris S., Evelyn R., Fawn B., Ferne, George S., Gregg D., Helena, James R., Jeanette O. & Family, Jill R., Joe K., 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 Ashton Family, the family of Naomi Schleicher, the family of Joshua Fulmer, and 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!***

