

Our Spire
Volume 39
December 2019
–January 2020
Number 11



**Reaching Up to God,
Reaching Out to People**

Pastor's Corner:

*“Light of Light, we humbly pray;
shine in our hearts today.
Dispel the gloom and dark of night;
fill the world with love and light.
Voices cry out from a world in grief;
prayers of those who seek relief.
End their darkness,
hear their call for peace on earth,
good will for all.”*



These lyrics (above) are from songwriter Joel Raney (2019 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60199). Raney wrote the song *Light of Light*, which will greet us during our Advent season. We, both the choir and the congregation, will sing these lyrics each week. Slowly and gently, we will begin to understand the divine mystery of God with us here on earth fully wrapped in human flesh.

As I think about these lyrics, I am reminded of a Bible study we had around the pastor's round table a few years ago. The study was on Ecclesiastes and we, the students, delved into the ancient, sacred text with reverence and curiosity. Each voice at the table brought meaning to the chapters we engaged week after week. I speak for all of us when I share that it was delightful, important, informational, binding, and beautiful.

Something unique happened in this study. As the journey for us unfolded, we each came to the place of saying in the breadth and width of the Old Testament script how we missed the hope of Jesus in the words on the pages before us. See, we had spent so much time in a part of the Bible that never referenced Jesus.

We came to this conclusion. We needed Jesus. We needed his presence, his purpose, and his perfect peace.

I mention this because I pray that it is impossible for you to imagine your life without the Light of Light, Jesus among us. Songwriter Joel Raney poetically and painfully captures the plight of the world these days in his lyrics, which, when we consider the copyright date, are new to the world this year. Raney writes that darkness and despair surround us.

Yet we not alone. We are not abandoned. We are not forgotten. We have the light of Christ in us.

The October sermon series we've had together still echoes in the chambers of my heart. We talked about being lights in the world. I pray that sermon series still reaches and resonates with you. I hear Raney's voice align with what we shared together this past October. His lyrics speak to where the sermons have called us to go—and that is into the world. When he writes, “End their darkness, hear their call for peace on earth, good will for all,” he speaks of Christ. Specifically, he speaks of Christ through us.

Research for my dissertation has informed us as a congregation of this sobering fact: less and less of a church presence is in our world today. The November 24th sermon will mention the United Church of Christ Church in Tannersville, PA, which is just a little over an hour away from Harford. That lovely church at an intersection surrounded by bustling retail life *and* a park right across the street, closed at the end of this past October. A light went out.

I share this because we all need to be reminded that lights do go out around us, making our call to have Christ's light within us all the more imperative. A miracle came to us in baby Jesus. That miracle lives in you. Choose to share the miracle of Christ in the darkening world by joining us in His light now and into the new year. God Bless your 2020, which, as this December sermon series will teach and inspire us, will include 20/20 vision not for us alone, but for Christ to light the world through us.

JOIN US ON THAT SPECIAL NIGHT: Christmas WILL find you

I remember the Christmas Eve where, in front of the night's congregation, I looked into the hearts of those in front of me and said what was true: "Christmas has already started."

It was there! Maybe someone literally had some last-minute wrapping to do, but all in all, Christmas *was* upon us!

And Christmas 2019 can be upon you, too.

I know of an amazing, odds-stacked-against-them couple where one partner named early on what was between them in a relationship God destined. He called what the two of them had "Loveship." Loveship was bigger than each of them on their own. Both learned that their Loveship was also bigger than the two of them together. Through their trials, highs, and lows, they learned that their Loveship has a life, a power, and a guiding presence—its own existence—that is somehow all its own. When both wanted to bail because it was truly challenging, their Loveship literally guided them through many tough times.

Christmas is just like this Loveship. Christmas finds us. And Christmas is far bigger than us. We have some challenges in our lives. For some of us, Christmas may not be what it was. But Christmas is still Christmas, and Christmas will find you.

How will it find you? Join us Christmas Eve. The awe and the splendor of our sanctuary aglow will warm your heart and kindle your faith. The glow of that candle, somehow warm against your face and your soul, illuminating the lyrics to *Silent Night*, makes us aware, year after year, of a God who loves us so much that He sent His Son to us. And His Son with us makes all the difference in the world.

This Son with us makes all the difference in your world.

Our service starts at 8 PM. Join us. Experience Christmas.



2020 VISION: Let's learn from a fate that faith will lead us forward

Imagine the church you have loved from your childhood is no longer a church. The altar table, lectern and pulpit furnishings are listed in a letter for sale along with other items that filled the sanctuary, like the hymn board, baptismal font and piano.



Some don't have to imagine this. This actually happened. Their UCC church in Tannersville, PA, an hour from Harford, closed.

And I met them.

Just before two weeks of my vacation time began, I learned of this dying-now-dead church in Tannersville that permanently closed its doors after a final worship on Sunday, October 27, 2019. I learned of this church because it was selling its furnishings. The final six members sent a letter to all the churches in the Penn Northeast Conference. Item by item, these faithful to the end Christians offered their church's soul—its contents—to anyone interested. Imagine writing *that* letter.



You don't have to imagine what it felt like to walk into the church less than two weeks after it closed. I did that. I was to meet the six members at a said time. I was on time. They were in a part of the church similar to our Lecture Hall. I entered through one of the red front doors of the sanctuary. Alone, I stood in shock and dismay.

Our sanctuary is uncomfortably cold during the week. I get the practical side of this, I do. I also find sad.

This place was freezing. Literally. I could see where the pews had been. The gorgeous red carpet left marks where history had been.



The ceiling in this sanctuary was like ours. Beautiful. Our white was their stained wood, but just as much—or even more—detail went into that ceiling. The craftsmanship spoke of love. It also spoke of faith seen.....those woodworkers didn't build that ceiling as they did for that church to close.

Yet it did. Why? There are a hundred reasons. Most of them are known. Some are not.

Grace United Church of Christ in Tannersville was poised at a busy intersection. You literally had a traffic light RIGHT there. You HAD to stop and see this church. The famous Tannersville outlet stores were a football field away. And speaking of fields? RIGHT across the STREET from the church was a community ballfield. I would be THRILLED as a pastor at this real estate location. Truly. Golden. I mean, THIS church sat on a Promised Land!

Grace United Church of Christ closed because they lost their vision. They lost their ability to see that God guides and provides.

Don't think that can't happen here.

I am not a career minister. I certainly could have been marketing my resume after year four here in Harford, biding my time for a bigger, brighter opportunity. Other pastors do this. After all, I had the ordination. I had the experience. "Let's see what's out there?" I could have wondered. But I didn't.

This church, as I learned from those above me (now literally in heaven—and I am speaking now about the many church mentors from my youth) is MY church. My home. And everything matters. All these ministry moments we continue to do—matter. This matters. YOU matter!

I am not scared. And I don't want you to be, either. God *is* good. And God *is* guiding us. We can have faith or we can have fear. One is right. One isn't. And it's that simple

So, we step forward in faith. This 'stepping forward' will happen in the year 2020. I'm calling this our 2020 vision quest. We will see clearly. We will continue to be educated and inspired by the Bible, our Holy text, with sermon series every month. There will be an overarching arc throughout this year. Where is God calling us to look? Who will we see? What will we see? How will we respond? When will we respond not by our direction, but God's.

Someone I work with regularly asked if, after this doctorate, things would return to "normal." If I'd slow down. This person implied that I (we) would return to what was. No.

I was called to this degree as I was called to this church. I have seen the glory of God through my eyes by watching and learning from you. You impress me. Yes, there are some who are floundering in the moment. They are lost, scared, stubborn, or ignoring the nudges God keeps sending. But you know what is true, don't you? We've all foundered. We've all been lost, scared, and stubborn. Each of us has ignored what God has put on our hearts for His church here in Harford to run instead of limp.

This church is incredibly giving. This church loves its projects. The missionary society, as just *one* example, challenged and enabled us to send 52 Operation Christmas Child boxes, 75 hygiene kits, and 30 Disaster Relief Buckets to places in need. This sings to the November 24th sermon about God's love being made visible (Colossians 1:15).

So, what is next? Are we going to give, or are we going to give up?

You have a choice, dear congregation. Before you consider that choice about how to support this mission-based church in this New Year *and beyond*, consider again that God chose you. He chose you, with the unique and wonderful skillset you have, to light the world with His love. He chose to send His Son to die for you so that you—and others you reach with your ministry—will live forever with Him.

Suggestion? Live forever with Him now. Now. Those final six members from the Tannersville UCC church have a lot to say from the hurt that has kept them down. Fear closed their church. Inaction kept them from growth. That congregation lacked vision and faith.

Proverbs 29:18 reads, "Where there is no vision, the people perish (KJV)." With the pictures accompanying this letter here, you see this is true. People do perish without a vision.

Our vision for 2020 will be big and it will be bold. To start, we will be Going for the Goals again. (Look for that date to be set.) Together, we will see that we aren't called to be comfortable, but sustaining, not to be disabled but enabled by God to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick literally and metaphorically.

To 2020. It begins now.

Dear Lord,

You have guided us before, and we pray that You continue to guide us now. Guide our giving. Speak into our hearts. Help us see that our resources of time, talent, and money are not ours. They are gifts from You. Stir in us the faith that built this church and continues TO BUILD this church.

By the presence of the Holy Spirit, we say in Jesus' name....

Amen.

The logo features the year '2020' in a large, stylized font. The first '0' is green, the '2' is blue, and the second '0' is teal. Below the year, the word 'VISION' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is enclosed in a blue rectangular border.

Disaster Relief Efforts



We were able to assemble:

75 Hygiene Kits

30 Clean Up Buckets

Plus we have enough money to cover shipping!

Thank you to all those that provided supplies and/or money to make this project a reality.

Thank You! Missionary Group



Operation Christmas Child: This program encourages children in developing countries to sign up for a Christmas box. Approximately 1/3 of the children are selected to attend an age appropriate discipleship program for 3 months. At the end of the program, all the children in the program and all the rest of the children receive the Christmas boxes. This box also includes a book called "The Greatest Gift". This book is written in the child's language and explains Jesus Christ and Salvation. All children are then invited to attend discipleship classes. The Christmas Child Shoeboxes are boxes filled with gifts for a boy or girl ages 2-4, 5-9 and 10-14. Our goal was 50 boxes this year.

We exceeded our goal and filled 52 boxes!

Thank you to all that donated or filled the Christmas boxes for this wonderful program!

Missionary Group



**Spire Sponsor
Priscilla Allen**





11-24-19
Lighting the Gratitude Christmas Tree!

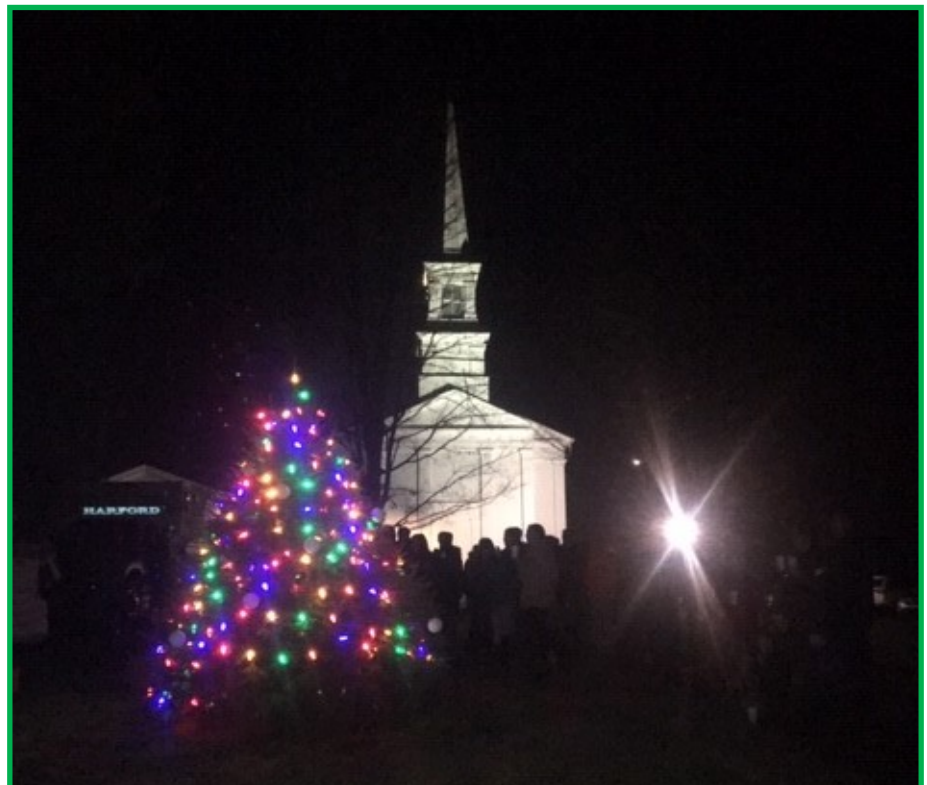
Each person decorated a red, gold or silver Christmas Tree ornament with what they were thankful for this year.

Each Group (Education, Trustees, Susquehanna County Interfaith, Cub Scout Pack 98, Boy Scout Troop 98, Girl Scout Troop 5086, Summer Lunch Box Program, Susquehanna County 4-H, Karen Voight MV School Superintendent, Adult Sunday School, Susquehanna County Commissioners) that participated did the same by decorating a large white ornament.

We sang several songs of thanks and then finished with Christmas Carols and a candle light Silent Night.

We all went outdoor to light and decorate the tree.

Thank you to all that participated!





Willing Worker Roast Beef Dinner
November 23, 2019
3:00-6:30
Harford First Congregational Church



The Willing Workers would like to thank everyone who worked in the kitchen or dining room for the Roast Beef Dinner on Nov. 23th. I would especially like to thank the community for their support.

The Willing Worker members did an awesome job with selling 206 presold tickets. We sold 79 tickets at the door. A total of 133 take outs and 152 people dined in, for a total of 285. Thank you again.

Ivie Simons, Past President



GAME ON GOES BIG WITH BASKETBALL

9 State Troopers and 16 local teens met at the Mountain View High School gym on Friday night, November 1st, for a GAME ON community night of basketball and memories. After the National Anthem and before a prayer, Pastor Will spoke briefly from the heart of how the troopers willingly gave up their night to be a part of the community that can be safe when we all work together. He mentioned choices, how his late nephew Adam lives on, and how proud Adam would be to know that these teens and troopers are making positive relationships happen right now.

Corey Gesford was the referee for the night. Robert Supancik announced. Emily and Katelyn Supancik were in charge of the clock and scoreboard. Dwight Carey and Jason Henke were the coaches for the teen team.

The Susquehanna County Dairy Ambassadors spoke about the dairy industry for a few minutes and provided prizes to the little ones playing games on the court hosted by Craig Scout. The Ambassadors also handed out chocolate milk to everyone.

The game was close. The troopers *narrowly* won—this time!

This was the second GAME ON outing of troopers and teens playing a game this year. The first event happened with summer with a softball game on the Harford baseball field.

More GAME ON games are planned in the future. Please support these community-wide events as you can so that God's love is known and shown through Harford First Congregational-UCC.

\$190.50 was raised for future youth and outreach programs at the concession stand manned in the lobby.

The Acre Lake Store donated 6 pizzas. Please thank them for their help that night.

And thank you to all who supported the troopers and teens with cheers in the stands.

Sunday, December 22, 2019. Congregation, come and help dedicate our new sign. The sign will be unveiled after the service.



CONGRATULATIONS!!!!!!

ERIC AND KATHERINE DOOLITTLE ANNOUNCE:

THE BIRTH OF

BENJAMIN RICHARD DOOLITTLE,

BORN ON 11/6/2019



Council Minutes
11-21-19

Financial Secretary: We have received 31 pledges for a total of \$59,850. This is well under the forecast expenditures.

Treasurer's Report: All hail damage repairs have been paid for and the insurance amounts have been received. Our incoming funds are currently running approximately \$2500 below budget and are draining our reserves.

Bell Choir: We are meeting Mondays at 7:30-8:30. We need lighting in the balcony so the music can be seen. The old lights are there but the clips to hold them to the tables seem to be missing (found). We still need more people.

Choir: Practicing Advent music. Need more singers. Will Go to HVA for a Christmas Party and sing Sunday, December 1, 2019 from 2:00-4:00.

Clerk: A family is trying to track down ancestors.

Christian Education: CE met on November 3, 2019 at 9:00 A.M.

Topics discussed: Moving of Sunday School time to 11:00 A.M. had been thought about and it was decided it wouldn't be fair to the children currently attending to change so the time will remain at 9:30.

Christmas pageant : An idea was presented to include all the elements of the story beginning with the angel Gabriel coming to Mary and telling her she would bear the Son of God, then continuing with the angel telling Joseph to take Mary as his wife, and the story would continue from their until it was time for the donkey to tell the rest of the story.

Next meeting is on December 1, 2019 at 9:00 A.M.

Cradle Roll: One child has been born. They received a hand-made receiving blanket and a letter.

Deacon:

Kay opened the meeting with Luke 1 :46,47-49

-Kay ordered and received ornaments that will be used on the Gratitude Christmas Tree. Smaller colored ones to be used by individuals and larger white ones to be used by Committees and Community groups.

-Ginny had several cards for Deacons to sign for various recipients.

-December 8th will be Christmas card signing day in LH after worship. Deacons will provide crackers, cheese, fruit and veggie platters and water.

-Christmas Eve service is at 8pm- Leanne and Tammy will usher and Missy, Gail and Kay will be greeters.

The kids will light Advent candles this year. Kay will ask to make sure all kids on board with this.

-David Schulte III announced that he has accepted a teaching position at Marywood on Monday and Wednesday evenings starting in January. This will interfere with him attending Monday night Deacon meetings. It was suggested to possibly have Deacon Meetings on Sundays after worship starting in the New Year. All at meeting were okay with this. The idea will be discussed with those who were not present for the meeting.

The meeting closed with a roundtable prayer.

The next Deacons meeting will be December 9th at 7 pm.

Game On: Held a basketball game at Mountainview with the State troopers Friday November 1, 2019. 16 youth participated.

-Plan to help Missionary unload for the yard sale December 4, 2019 at 4:00 at Lee's Furniture.

-Plan to help wrap Christmas gifts at Viewmont Mall December 7, 2019 from 12-4:00.

Historian: An average of 55 people per week last month.

Missionary Minutes:

-Food Bank: The Church is working on becoming an area Weinberg Food Bank. Paperwork is being filled out and a site inspection will be done. Two distributions per month are being considered. No money needs to be supplied by the church. The target dates are the second and fourth Monday 4-6:00pm of each month, starting in January. Volunteers will be needed to help bring the food into the church. The youth will help with the distribution.

-Christmas Tree Lighting: We decorated an ornament with our blessings and Holli Chichester will be present at the Lighting November 24th 5:30-7:00 to place the ornament on the tree.

-Least Coin: Horizons of Friendship in Guatemala. A Least Coin sponsored program to decrease infant mortality via nutrition and immunizations and education. The program also assists domestic violence and gender inequality.

-Treasurers Report: We took in \$787.00 at the Bake Sale for Disaster kits plus \$356 from donations. We spent \$1140.68 and we need \$240 for shipping. We had significant donations for the Operation Christmas Child and the Disaster Kits. The break down for each project is unclear and we are working to straighten this out.

-Japanese Sister Churches: Our Japanese sister churches want to have a supportive relationship with us. They have sent letters that we respond to and pictures of their congregations. We will take pictures at the Community Christmas Tree lighting to include in our Christmas letter. Karen is working on this letter.

-Correspondence: CareNet sent a thank you for our donation and a list of needed items. We will join with North Harford Willing Workers in the **Show of Blessings in April** to gather items for CareNet and the Women's Resource Center.

-Disaster Kit: We will assemble 30 Clean Up Buckets and 75 Hygiene Kits Friday, November 22 at 4:00. The youth will also assist. A new list of collection Depots is being sent to us.

-Operation Christmas Child: We exceeded all of our expectations and were able to fill 52 boxes of children. Our congregation is so loving and giving. The boxes will be taken to Montrose Bible Conference Friday from 12-2. \$468 is needed for shipping and enough was donated to cover this expense.

-Soup Ministry: We will meet December 17th at 9:00 am to make soup for the soup Ministry. We will have our December meeting following. Wendy Phillips will purchase bags and soup containers for the soup.

Yard Sale: We will meet at Gwynn Diaz's garage December 4th at 2:30. The trailer will already be loaded. All remaining items will be loaded into cars and trucks. We will head to Lee's Furniture in Montrose for a 4:00 unloading. We hope to have some youth to help with unloading. December 5th is the set up. Holli will be at Lee's at 8:00am. People will come as they can for helping to set up (Kay, Teresa, Wendy, Karen, Priscilla). Holli will ask Debbie Strong (set up), Betty Lou Bennett (set up) and George Weideman (unloading) if they would be willing to help. The yard sale is December 6, 8-5 and December 7, 8-1. We will use the tables from the church and loaned plywood from the hardware store in Montrose.

Pastor Relations: No meeting. Will meet December 2, 2019.

Stewardship: A small group of Stewardship members met on November 14. First on the agenda was financial the secretary reporting that 30 pledges have been received so far for a total of \$55,950.

-Next step was reviewing the budget for 2020. Julia did a great job having changes edited and ready to go to council next week. The total operating budget proposed for 2020 is \$150,875. This makes the monthly budget \$1273.

-The fall clothing campaign is coming to a close and Kay was delivering the desserts for feed a friend.

-We then finalized plans for the start of Advent party at the HVA on Dec.1. Next meeting will be in January after the Annual meeting.

Trustee:

Old Business: BSR has fixed a flashing problem on the roof near the bell tower and addressed other flashing issues. There is still a leak over the main entrance.

New Business: Trustees are looking for someone to shovel snow for this year. Tanner Stout has agreed to do this job.

-The council would like to put a live Christmas Tree in front of the Church. Looking for advice on the location. (It has been planted).

-Bell Choir needs new cushions for the tables that they use. They were damaged by water after the hail storm. Kandy may know where to get them. The company that made the new pew cushions may be an option. The tables themselves are also missing (found).

-Several fluorescent bulbs are out in the gathering room and hallway. Trustees will purchase a case of LED bulbs and replace all of them. There are 12 fixtures. (All done).

-Gary has been working with Dale Grant and Brian Kovalesky about putting pole light in back parking lot. It should still happen this year.

Willing Workers: The big group of Willing Workers met on Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at 1:00PM in the Lecture Hall. Ten women were present . Kingsley group furnished devotions and refreshments.

-The treasurer's report was presented. A large number of magic cloths had been purchased since the fair. Kandy is to order whatever else is needed for the Log Cabin... so far fudge bags and dishcloths.

-The Old Log Cabin at the fair grounds is going to be dismantled, moved to a new location on the fair grounds, and rebuilt as a museum. The Harford historical society has been instrumental in this. When the time comes, our supplies in the cabin will need to be moved and stored for our new location next year.

-The roast beef dinner is November 23.

-A form for Food Safe Certification for 2020 was received. Clarification is needed so we know what or if we need to do something. The Weinberg Food Bank offers this class free to us.

-The annual meeting is Sunday, Jan 26 immediately following church. We provide a light lunch. North Harford has soup, Kingsley has beverage, 2 loaves of sandwiches and 2 cakes, Harford has set up, 2 loaves of sandwiches and 2 cakes. Everyone is clean up.

-Election of officers: Kay Gow-President, JoAnn Titus-Vice President, Ellen Holdredge-Secretary, Sharon Kinney-Treasurer.

-The next meeting is Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 1:00 PM in the Lecture Hall. North Harford is hostess.

Pastor's Report: None

Old Business:

Annual Reports are do by December 20th. Don't be late!

Sign: It has been delivered and is stored at Bennett's Garage until the concrete is cured.

The cement will be poured Wednesday, November 27, 2019.

The electrician will come after the cement is poured.

All the sidewalk stones were saved if they could be and moved to a location were they could be utilized.

Sign software is here.

The JHA costs were taken to the Township meeting and a request was made to lower these costs. The actual JHA cost will be determined by the Township and they will get back to us.

There was a request to consider natural gas. The trustees will look into this.

New Business:

Julia Gardner presented a budget for 2020. It was approved to be presented to the congregation at the Annual meeting.

Judy Mitchell reported that a man entered the building when it was unlocked looking for money. She and others are often in the building alone and uncontrolled access is dangerous. She requested that security cameras be investigated. Council tasked the Trustees with checking into options.

The Annual meeting is January 26, 2020 after church.

The next Council meeting is January 30, 2020.

November 10 2019 Short Council meeting after church:

-Held a discussion regarding planting a live tree in the church front yard. A live tree will be planted (already has been) in the church yard. When the tree gets to 14 feet, Jeffer's Farms will replace the tree with a smaller tree and replant the big one elsewhere.

-Weinberg Food Bank. It was decided to begin to be a food bank distribution site two times per month. This will cost nothing and we will not need to store supplies on site. We will begin distribution in January and plan to try the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 4-6:00pm. We are not locked into this plan and can alter it if need be. Please pray that God directs the usage of this food to His will.

Help!!!! We need all types of fabric for craft projects

for the log cabin next year! Please call or text Holli Chichester at 301-643-1775 if you have fabric that you could donate.



Dear friends,

My heart continues to sing after your vote to call me as your fourth settled Conference Minister. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for the faith you have placed in me. The whole day on Saturday was meaningful, collegial, educational, and spirit-filled.

Someone recently said that not many people like meetings, and especially on Saturday, but if that's what it takes to get us together for fellowship and relationship building, Saturday meetings just might be worth it. I would concur. Getting together for fun and fellowship might be harder to plan for and to get people to attend, but let's see if we cannot do some of that as well. Maybe an all-Conference picnic next summer? Maybe an all-Conference worship service – just because? You tell me what would mean the most to you and we'll see if we can't get something planned.

As I reflect more on the scripture from Isaiah 43, I think that God really is doing new things in Penn Northeast. We have forged some more positive relationships. We are learning to agree to disagree and move forward. We have begun to vision in the longer term, based on our core identity as a Conference – building relationships between churches, as reflected in Area Mission Councils; providing support for authorized ministers, through conversations and pastoral care; focusing on mission, through our Disaster Response Team and the Amigos de Guatemala. That is what I have learned about our core identity in Penn Northeast – relationships, support, and mission are important to us here. No matter what else we do, that is not going to change.

How we implement and nurture those core values may change, will change, as we explore new things together. More connections with the local church involves offering training, workshops, and activities around the conference. Sometimes we can do this face-to-face and sometimes we will have to rely on technology to make that happen. Forging some new partnerships with universities, colleges and community organizations will allow us to do that. Supporting authorized ministers' transitions as well as we offer more continuing education, more education for laity and members in discernment, conversations to determine needs and supports which will make it easier for our ministers to serve in our midst. Mission improves how our communities and the world see the church. It is vital that our actions in the public sphere reflect our love of God and our neighbors, all our neighbors. Issues of justice and mercy abound for us, as they did for Jesus. It is our call to love one another and impact the world in which we live. We may disagree about how to do that, but it is our call to **BE THE CHURCH** in the world.

I want you to know, if you don't already, that I really listen to the issues that matter to you, to the desires of your hearts, and to the joys and concerns you share. We will not always agree, but I will always listen. I pledge to you that I will serve this Conference to the best of my ability, now and in the days to come.

Blessings, Bonnie

Interfaith Christmas Tags

We received 25 tags from Interfaith on November 11. These tags are for children in Susquehanna County.

All 25 tags have been taken. Please have the unwrapped gift to the church (behind the back pew towards the

Lecture Hall) before December 9th.



All Saints Day Remembrance

Michael and Judy Bailey
Richard Berish
Jim Brink
Adam Nathan Frankel
June Germain
George W. and Minnie E. Gow
Howard L. Sr. and Alice M. Gow
William S. Hagenbuch
Kenneth and Elizabeth Laurie
Richard and Eloise Masters
Bethany Millard
Charles Millard

William J. Mitchell
Robert T and Margaret M. Mitchell
Robert E. Mitchell
Squier and Lillian Phillips
Alvin C. Seamans
Elbert C. Seamans
Donald and Ruth Tiffany
George Warren
Grace Warren
Helen Warren
Wayne Warren
William F. and Elizabeth L. Zick



The Website is up and running.

We have worked hard, but we realize that important things may not have been included.

We are still adding and changing things so if you have suggestions, please email Holli Chichester at hollischichester@gmail.com or call 301-643-1775.

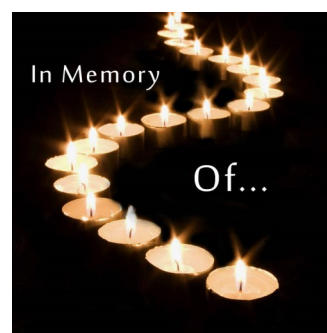
Please check it out at

www.firstchurchharford.com.



“In memory of Lola Davis”

Lynn Butler



Gift Wrapping for Cerebral Palsy

at the Viewmont Mall

from 12-4 on

December 7, 2019

Please consider shopping on this day and having your gifts wrapped by our own church members and the youth!



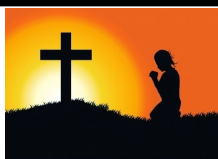
Bell Choir Rebirth!!!!!!

Bob DeLuca has graciously volunteered to conduct a bell choir. The Bell Choir will meet Mondays at the church balcony at 7:30.

We need 3 more people to complete our 3 octave bell choir. Please call or email Bob if you would be interested in participating.

570-498-7090

gepetto@nep.net



Prayer Concerns

Nicholas (Great Grandson of the Weidemans)

Patrick Simons

Scott Klenk

Heather Warren

Sandy Zupanovich

Christian Kuhar

Mary Jane Genneken

Sandy Paolucci

Brandi & Dave

Larry Herbert

Helen Foster

Newly married Tatiana and Kurt MacDowell

Family of Richard Berish

Helen Castronova (Judy's Sister-in-law)

Betsy Jones

Corinne Chichester (job search)

Rock Estabrook

Richard Arnold

Family of Steve Decker

Joe Batzel and family

Jessica Miller

Evan Clarkson

our nation under God

our government

Aspen Batzel

Barbara Weideman

John Butler

Corinne Chichester and job search

Sharon Frantz

Weinberg Food Bank

Carrie Gettle (Judy's cousin)

Veterans Day

Our active duty and veterans:

Loren Robinson

Kay Gow

Evan Clarkson



Home Bound

The Carey Family

Dorothy Greene

Catherine Escandel

Barbara Pease



Notice: Please send all material for February to be included in the Spire to
Firstchurchspire@gmail.com
by the 15th of January 2020!

Worship Assistants– December

Greeters

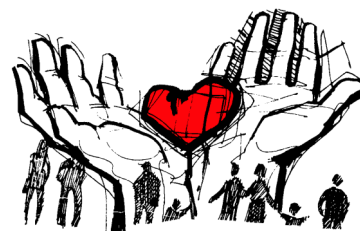
December 01, 2019 Karen Jones
December 08, 2019 Nancy Burris
December 15, 2019 Twila Williams
December 22, 2019 Holli Chichester
December 24, 2019 Dorothy Hagenbuch
December 29, 2019 Jacquie Phillips

Readers

December 01, 2019 Sue Needham
December 08, 2019 Anita Millard
December 15, 2019 Wendy Phillips
December 22, 2019 Michelle Estabrook
December 29, 2019 Leanne Colwell

Ushers

December 01, 2019 Rich and Shirley Masters
December 08, 2019 Bonnie Love-Colwell and Leanne Colwell
December 15, 2019 Ginny Ahearn and Karen Jones
December 22, 2019 Teresa Lamberson and Karen Jones
December 24, 2019 Gary Phillips and Kay Gow
December 29, 2019 Kay Gow and Karen Jones



Worship Assistants– January

Greeters

January 05, 2020 Judy Mitchell
January 12, 2020 Peg Empet
January 19, 2020 Alice Archer
January 26, 2020 Julie Kesten

Readers

January 05, 2020 Nancy Burris
January 12, 2020 Peg Empet
January 19, 2020 Bonnie Love-Colwell
January 24, 2020 Scott Muller

Ushers

January 05, 2020 Bailey Millard and Mikaela Stout
January 12, 2020 Bill Chichester and Gary Phillips
January 19, 2020 Alyssa Clarkson and Cody Nolan
January 26, 2020 Harry and Julia Gardner

Memorial Plaque Information

Are you interested in having a plaque attached to the memorial stone in the memorial garden? One may have a plaque ordered by doing the following:
Cost---\$25.00



Send check (made out to First Congregational-UCC) along with name of person and the year of birth and the year they passed away to the office.

The office will then proceed to order the plaque and have it placed on the stone.
Thank you.

HUGE Rummage Sale

Christmas in Montrose

Fri Dec 6 8-5

Sat Dec 7 8-1

back of Lee's store Church St

Some of everything, including furniture

**Supports work with women
and children in Nicaragua**



Directory update

Dena Dew
498 Maple Lane
Thompson, PA 18465

Mandi Batzel, Ethan Rodriguez & Damien Cook
676 Bartholomew
Kingsley
PA 18826

Abigail Toolan and family
5054 State Route 247
Clifford Township
PA 18421

Christine, Ava and Conrad Depew
23 Sea Front Trail
Palm Coast
FL 32164

Jerilynn Watson
3101 State Route 2067
South Gibson
PA 18842



December Birthdays

December 1 Christopher Graf
December 6 Wayne Frederick
Wendy Phillips
Doug Phelps
December 7 Jacquie Phillips
December 12 Betty Lou Bennett
December 13 Ed Morrison
Joann Titus
December 14 Jud Holdredge
December 16 Lynola Carey
December 18 JoAnn Grimes
December 21 Olivia Zick
Carol Morrison
December 23 Catherine Escandel
December 24 Barb Chidester
December 28 Ann Marie Graf
Tammy Stout
December 29 Danielle Urda
Michael Lamberson
December 31 Rick and Beth Ann Masters



January Birthdays

January 2 Lisa Higgins
January 4 Davis Schulte III
January 6 Alyssa Clarkson
Anita Millard
January 15 John and Lola Zimmerman
January 22 Maya Mitchell
Sherry Decker
January 23 Aiden Miller
January 24 Melissa Heller
January 25 Ashley Millard Parsons
January 29 Bailey Millard
January 30 Sue Furney
Linda Lindsey
Karen Jones
January 31 Charlene Batzel
Bill Chichester

Spire Sponsors

We **need Sponsors** to help us cover the cost of printing and mailing the Spire. Please let us know if you can help.

The sponsorship can be in Memory or in Honor of someone or just a donation.

Mailing costs approximately \$75/month.

www.RockMountainBibleCamp.org/THAW



EXPERIENCE FUN



Night Game, Tournaments (Ga-Ga, Basketball, Volleyball, Carpetball, Foosball), Zipline, Lasertag, Snack Shop, Youth-Group Challenge, Tubing (if snow), "Rock Mountain LIVE"

EXPERIENCE COMMUNITY



Spend time together as a youth group: Create memories, have fun, learn, and worship God together! Build deeper relationships with each other and with God.

EXPERIENCE TRUTH & CHANGE



Life-changing truth from God's Word will be taught and discussed in Sessions & Youth Group time!

REGISTER YOUR YOUTH GROUP - by February 15th

\$109 per person –Includes 2 nights, 2 snacks, 5 meals, & all activities.

Get 1 FREE with every 10 paid attendees!



570-756-2200



ReidA@RockMountain.org



Hey!

We are excited to provide 2 winter weekends for Middle/High School Youth Ministries in 2020 - THAW 2020. The available dates are: February 28-March 1, or March 6-8.

www.RockMountainBibleCamo.org/THAW

The cost for the weekend is holding at \$109 per person again this year! Any groups get 1 FREE person for every 10 Paid registrations!

We are also making a t-shirt available at-cost on pre-order (\$8) if your group wants to add-on a tee to the weekend. Any available tees will be sold throughout the weekend for only \$10 if you would rather not build that into your costs for the weekend.

Our Speakers are for the Weekends are:

Jeremy Maslin - from Crossroads Family Ministries (Sayre, PA) - Feb 28-Mar 1

Mel Walker - from Wyoming Valley Church (Wilkes-Barre, PA)- Mar 6-8

They will be teaching/encouraging from God's Word in Sessions and they will have small group discussion guides prepared for your youth group leadership to facilitate discussion/application within your students/leaders.

I will be mailing packets out by the end of this week. If you know of any other youth groups/ministries that would enjoy joining us for THAW, please pass along my contact info to them.

If there are any specific ways we can be praying for you and your ministry, please reach out!

Serving Christ With You,
Reid Anderson, Program Manager
Rock Mountain Bible Camp
570-756-2200 x216
607-205-0483

www.RockMountainBibleCamp.org

Cookie Walk
Clifford Vacation Bible School
Christmas Cookie Walk
Saturday December 14th, 2019
9AM UNTIL NOON
Clifford United Methodist Church
Main Street, Clifford, PA
\$14.00 for a large container
\$7.00 for a small container
TOYS FOR TOTS
Drop-off Site

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

I would like to order:

_____ Red poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)
_____ White poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)
_____ Pink poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

"DEADLINE December 08, 2019

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

Mail order and payment to:

First Congregational-UCC
P. O. Box 217
Harford, PA 18823

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

I would like to order:

_____ Red poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)
_____ White poinsettia plants at \$7.00 ==\$(total price)
_____ Pink poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

December 2019

| December 2019 | | | | | | | January 2020 | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| Dec 1 7:30am 11:00am Breakfast/fire hall 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Wor 2:00pm 4:00pm HVA-St 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scou | 2 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell practice (Balcony) | 3 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR) | 4 9:00am 12:00pm NO Crafts 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 5 Rummage sale set up | 6 Pastor day off Rummage sale (Lee's) 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | 7 7:00am 7:30am Rummage sale (Lee's) 12:00pm 4:00pm Gift Wrapping (Viewmont mall) |
| 8 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 12:00pm 1:00pm Christmas card signi 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scou | 9 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor i 6:00pm 7:30pm Girl Sc 7:00pm 8:30pm Deaco 7:00pm 8:30pm Trustee 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 10 7:30am 9:00am Men's brkfst (Binghams) 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (| 11 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 12 12:00pm 1:00pm KWW (Speakeasy) | 13 Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | 14 9:00am 12:00pm Clifford cookie walk (methodist) |
| 15 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 1:30pm 4:00pm Boy scouts Honor Court (| 16 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 12:00pm 1:00pm Ladie 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor i 5:30pm 8:30pm J. Drak 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 17 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR) | 18 9:00am 12:00pm Crafts (Hollis) 4:00pm 6:00pm Clifford Meth dinner 5:15pm 6:30pm Armett 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts | 19 7:00pm 9:00pm NO Stewardship | 20 Annual reports due Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | 21 |
| 22 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scouts (LH) | 23 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell practice (Balcony) | 24 NO Choir NO Karate 9:30am 1:00pm NO Ugly Quilts 8:00pm 9:00pm Christmas Eve Servic | 25 Merry Christmas | 26 6:30pm 8:00pm NO Council | 27 Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | 28 |
| 29 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scouts (LH) | 30 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell practice (Balcony) | 31 9:30am 1:00pm NO Ugly Quilts | Jan 1, 20 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Dec 1 - 7

Dec 8 - 14

Dec 15 - 21

Dec 22 - 28

Dec 29 - Jan 4

January 2020

| January 2020 | | | | | | | February 2020 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--------------|
| Dec 29 | 30 | 31 | Jan 1, 20 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| | | | | | Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 7:30am 11:00am Breakfast/fire hall 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scou | 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 7:00pm 9:30pm Fair mt 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR) | 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scouts (LH) | 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor i 6:00pm 7:30pm Girl Sc 7:00pm 8:30pm Deaco 7:00pm 8:30pm Trustee 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 7:30am 9:00am Men's brkfst (Binghams) 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (| 9:00am 12:00pm Crafts (H. Chichester) 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 5:00pm 8:30pm J. Drake (LH) 7:00pm 9:00pm Stewardship | Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scouts (LH) | 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 12:00pm 1:00pm Ladies Lunch (Bingh 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor i 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm 3:00pm Missionary (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (| 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 6:30pm 8:00pm Council (LH) | Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | Feb 1 |
| 9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Worship 12:00pm 2:00pm Annual mtg (LH) 7:00pm 9:00pm B. Scou | 9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 6:00pm 7:30pm Girl Sc 7:30pm 8:30pm Bell pra | 9:30am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm Karate (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR) | 5:15pm 6:30pm Armettas 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts (LH) | 10:00am 1:00pm KWW (LH) 6:30pm 9:00pm Council (LH) | Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) | |

Dec 29 - Jan 4

Jan 5 - 11

Jan 12 - 18

Jan 19 - 25

Jan 26 - Feb 1

Non-Profit Organization

US Postage Paid

PERMIT—#20

Montrose, PA 18801

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
5016 Creek Road
PO Box 217
Harford, PA 18823
Tel. 570-434-2260
Email: firstch@nep.net
Spire email: firstchurchspire@gmail.com
Web URL: www.firstchurchharford.com

.....the people in darkness have seen a great light

Isaiah 9:2

Join Us Each Sunday!!



Harford First Congregational Church—UCC

Rev. William Hagenbuch –Pastor
Home Phone: 570-434-7729
Email: wrh@nep.net
Office Hours: Mon. 4-5:30 pm

Judy Mitchell –Sec
Hours: Tuesday 1:00-5:00
Friday 1:00-5:00