



OUR SPIRE

Volume 38 March 2019 Number 3

Lent? ...What is Lent?

Lent is a 40-day season in the Church Calendar beginning Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday. Lent is observed on Wednesdays, but Sundays during Lent are treated as 'Little Easters', and not counted as part of Lent. During this time, we focus on what Jesus did to win our salvation. He lived a perfect life and died for us under God's wrath. His sacrifice shows the true horror of our sins and moves us to turn from them.

But Why is Lent 40 Days?

The 40 days of Lent are taken from Christ's 40-day experience in the wilderness (**Matthew 4:1-11**). Here He faced off with the devil as our Champion, overcoming three temptations common to all mankind...

First, Christ was tempted to doubt God's loving care and thus to satisfy His needs Himself -- but instead Christ looks to God's Word and directs us back to trusting in God.

Second, by Satan's mishandling of Scripture, Christ was tempted to false belief in God -- but Christ dismisses such self-righteous spiritualism as tempting God, and reminds us of the need to seek out true Scriptural teaching.

Finally, Christ was tempted to forsake God in return for worldly pleasures, powers, and possessions -- but Christ forcefully rejects this notion as a ridiculous exchange of the priceless for the worthless, of a relationship with God for eternal separation from Him.

Do you face temptation?

Are you tempted to doubt God, or to believe things about God that the Bible says are not true, or even to *forsake God*?

Do you give in to this temptation?

**Turn to Christ this Lenten Season!
He is your Champion!**

And Why is Lent so Important?

- ***It shows us the true result of our sins ...they separate us from a righteous and just God.***

During Lent, we contemplate our sinful condition and need for a Saviour -- a man who is Holy in His nature and who lived a sinless life. In our natural condition, we are stained with an evil, fallen nature and are incapable of the perfect sinlessness required by God. As a result, all human effort fails to please God, we cannot have a relationship with Him, and we don't deserve one.

- ***It shows us the only payment for sin that God could accept ...the death of His Son.***

Though we are undeserving, God in His Grace desires a relationship with us. To accomplish this, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to live among us as a human. Because Jesus is God, He has the Holy nature we don't have, and lived a perfectly sinless life the way we never could. And, in obedience to God the Father, Jesus -- that is, God the Son -- willingly went to the cross, took upon Himself the sin of the whole world, and suffered for us sin's penalty: separation from God and death.

- ***It shows us the extent of God's Love ...by His Grace, through Faith in Jesus Christ, forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are ours for eternity.***

Jesus was innocent of the sin He carried for us, and the penalty He suffered held no power over Him. Thus, He was reconciled with His Heavenly Father and returned to life. Through faith in Christ, we are granted this blessing as well. He was Holy *for us*, He was perfect *for us*, He suffered the penalty of sin *for us*, and it is by faith *alone* -- not by our works, but by the finished work of Jesus Christ -- that we have forgiveness of sins, we are given a new, holy nature, we are reconciled with God, and at the Resurrection we will be given a new body that is unstained by sin.

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LENT 2019 asks SEVEN ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Both lifelong Christians and people on the edges of the church have some of the same basic questions about life and faith. Lent is the perfect time to explore these questions, leading up to the big question that is answered with Easter: is there hope for life and life beyond death?

Week One: Who Is Jesus? Matthew 16:13-16

Every person needs to grapple with Jesus' question to his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" Christians believe he is "the Christ, the son of the living God."

Week Two: What Matters Most? Mark 12:28-34

Relationships—with God and others—matter most.

Week Three: Am I Accepted? John 8:1-11

Even with our flaws, Jesus loves and accepts us as beloved children of God.

Week Four: Where Is God? John 1:1-5, 14

Although God is not limited to working through people, God primarily works through human instruments.

Week Five: What Brings Fulfillment? John 13:1-5, 13-17

True fulfillment comes from serving others.

Week Six: What about Suffering? Matthew 27:27-31

(Palm/Passion Sunday) Although God does not prevent suffering, the crucified God fully enters human suffering and works to redeem that suffering.

Week Seven: Is There Hope? Matthew 28:1-7

(Easter) Jesus Christ's resurrection gives us hope for life and even hope for death.

Ash Wednesday, March 6th: Each Church does their own service

All Services Begin at 7 p.m.

First Wednesday in Lent, March 13th:

Host Church: Harford Congregational
Special Music: Luke Taylor
Preacher: Lynn Wilcox
Children's Message: Margie McCarty
Refreshments provided by Host Church

Second Wednesday in Lent, March 20th:

Host Church: Great Bend
Special Music: Harford Congregational Choir
Preacher: Will Hagenbuch
Children's Message: Jane Pykus
Refreshments provided by Host Church

Third Wednesday in Lent, March 27th:

Host Church: First UMC, New Milford
Special Music: First UMC Choir
Preacher: Margie McCarty
Children's Message: Lucas Taylor
Refreshments provided by Host Church

Fourth Wednesday in Lent, April 3rd:

Host Church: First Universalist, Brooklyn
Special Music: Great Bend Choir
Preacher: Jane Pykus
Children's Message: Will Hagenbuch
Refreshments by Host Church

Fifth Wednesday in Lent, April 10th:

Host Church: Gibson UMC
Special Music: South Gibson Choir
Preacher: Jackie Condon
Children's Message: Jane Pykus
Refreshments provided by Host Church



PASTOR'S PAGE

This freebie will cost you, not your neighbor

"Why can't we do this?" During a meeting with the Deacons around five years ago, this spirited soul was following through with her brainstorm idea that we, the church, host a free dinner for the community.

We didn't do this five years ago. Maybe we hadn't grown enough as a church to extend the radical hospitality Jesus seeks in His followers. Maybe we hadn't learned that in God's economy there always is enough, and, unlike the widow at Zarephath (1 Kings 17), we can give not from any abundance we may have, but from hearts of generosity for our neighbors. Maybe we hadn't learned that love is something when we give it away.

What is clear to me over the past five years is what we have learned. We have learned that God wants us to move into the community. God wants us to build relationships beyond those in and around the church community we know. God wants us to give joyfully, not begrudgingly, and this upcoming Free Community Dinner on March 30 from 5 to 7 PM provides us the opportunity to do what Christ did for those He met, and that was serve them.

It's finally here. Thankfully, we didn't have to wander for forty years in the wilderness like the Israelites with Moses; we did it in five. We are entering a Promised Land which is not filled with milk and honey per se; instead, our Promised Land is filled with spaghetti, sauce, drinks and desserts.

This is exciting! When we pray for our church to grow, this is *exactly* what happens. God brings us to a point where we realize who we are—*exactly*, and this means we are doers of the Word. The only way we become doers of the Word is because we know the Word does not bind us to worry, but releases us to abundant grace and overflowing mercy in the form of generosity.

This community dinner *is* free to our guests, but it will cost you. I am not talking about covering the cost of the meal; no, that's taken care of through our Community Outreach Fund; I'm talking about what it will cost you to call on a neighbor who doesn't know where you worship, or the neighbor you either do not know, have not seen in a long while. Yikes! I'm even talking about a neighbor you may not like.

You can likely anticipate the immediate response your neighbors may have to a free dinner held in the Lecture Hall. The excuses to not come can pile up faster than the number of times the New England Patriots have won a Super Bowl. But this is where you step in, or maybe stand firm in your sincere, gentle, and endearing invitation. Offer to pick them up and take them, or make it a dinner date by setting a time when you'll meet them there. Let them know God's love in your words and in your care.

There is no catch to this. There is no ploy to get your unreligious neighbor or family member to get to our church, or to sway another churchgoer from their church to consider worship in Harford. Nope. From our abundance in Christ, this is just a time to gather, sit, break bread together, and be the community center this community without a center needs.

You're going to have to give, and this doesn't mean you open your wallet. It means you open your heart.

The Deacon I mentioned left our church and is now out of state. I wonder what would have happened had we rallied with her five years ago. You may now wonder this, too. Let's not wonder too long, however. Instead, let's honor her spirit and her spunk and the God she follows and do what we are called to do—love our neighbors.





LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORS

Let's get together and do just that!

Join us for...

spaghetti & meatballs, served with salad, bread, dessert and beverage!

The purpose of this event is to get together as a community, have fun, and get to know your neighbors!

FREE

Spaghetti Dinner
March 30th
5:00-7:00pm



If you would like to show love to your neighbor, you are invited to bring a canned food item for the church food pantry.

Harford First Congregational Church

Sponsored by the Youth and Outreach committee

Community Dinner

It's Time to Declutter, Again!!!!

The Missionary Group is sponsoring a yard sale May 17-18. The proceeds will go to help sponsors two Nicaraguan Missionaries living in Nicaragua. These native Nicaraguans have dedicated themselves to working to improve the living conditions of their fellow Nicaraguans by helping to develop community leaders and working to improve skills within the community.



We will be collecting anything to be sold in a yard sale: All decorations, lightly used Clothing, shoes, bedding, electrical appliances, lighting, TVs, furniture, household items, kitchen items, tools, yard stuff, toys, baby items, bikes, books etc.

Please bring any items to the lecture hall and label them "Yard Sale" now through May 12th.

If you would like a pick up, please contact Holli Chichester at 301-643-1775 or 570-851-5109 or hollischichester@gmail.com.

Thank you, Missionary Group



Go for the Goals!!!!

**“This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you”
-John 15:12**

The Stewardship Committee values your input. Your words matter!

Our church wide goals for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 are here. These goals came from you, the congregation. These goals began with conversations from four pull-out groups during our Annual Meeting on January 27, 2019. You could have also sent in a goal sheet on your own, and the deadline for all goals was February 18th. The Stewardship Committee met on February 21st and compiled our goals. These goals, which you see here in the Spire, were presented on Sunday, February 24th.

You likely have a response to some or perhaps all of these goals. To be effective Congregationalists, which is the history of this church, you have time and opportunity to provide feedback for these goals. You may love some goals! You may question other goals! You may not like a specific goal. **THIS IS YOUR TIME TO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. These sheets are due before March 18th.**

You do NOT need to fill out a comment sheet if you were present at the February 24th meeting. (You can add something here below, if you like.)

The comment sheet will be read by two people, Craig Stout and Sharon Kinney. The two will tabulate what is written for the Stewardship Committee to consider in the future.

Your words here matter! Let us hear from you! We do ask that you sign your name so your valued comments can be considered. If the Stewardship team has a question on your comments, Craig or Sharon will quietly go to you and ask for more info.

USE THIS SPACE AND ANY ADDITIONAL PAPER YOU NEED TO RESPOND. HELP US HELP THIS CONGREGATION BE THE CHURCH GOD IS CALLING US TO BE!

PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET (and others as needed) BY MAIL TO :

HARFORD FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH-UCC,
P.O. Box 217
Harford, PA 18823.

Our Goals

Goals For Every year:

Increase attendance and continue to develop the church to reach the unchurched

Continue to walk with God and look for His guidance in all we do here and at home

Stewardship role in the goals is to be the driving force behind them

Committees goals are to strive to help make these goals come to fruition

In your walk in faith with God as individuals, keep these goals and the church, in your prayers

Goals for 2019:

Increase use of existing church facilities

Complete sign project

Finish concrete/paving of parking lot, look into possibility of volleyball/basketball options at that time

Bring back Bible study

Website up and running

Study feasibility of a community space or building

Information about A.R.C.

Goals for 2020:

Level part of field behind memorial garden for play area– possibly building

Graduation party

Landscape work on front and side entrance

Continue to feed the community for free

Support new Game-On ideas and projects

Meet yearly to discuss goals

Goals for 2022

Community area under construction

Review goals to fill 2023

Goals for 2021

Senior activity/ministry/food

HVA transportation

Review goals to fill 2022-2023

Goals for 2023

Community area completed and dedicated

Set new goals

Scout Sunday

SCOUT SUNDAY WORSHIP FEBRUARY 3, 2019

We were excited to have Cub Scouts from pack 98 and Boy Scouts from Troop 98 part of our Worship Service. It is longstanding tradition to celebrate Scout Sunday on the first Sunday of February. The boys were multitaskers that day, as we had them start out by being Greeters at both entrances. Then they were pressed into being Acolytes. After lighting the candles, the Scouts then presented the colors, advancing the flags of the United States of America and the State of Pennsylvania to the front of the sanctuary. We then all joined in singing the National anthem. The Scouts then recited their oath. After the choir sang their anthem, the Scouts joined me up front for some questions. First on the agenda was to recognize Ben Galvin on his attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. On behalf of the church, I congratulated him and presented him with a gift. I then asked Ben if he had any words of encouragement for the scouts that were seated next to him. Ben responded "Make sure you do all the activities, the camping, hiking, high adventure, that's what will keep you going"! I asked Ben what his Eagle project was and he said he did a refurbishing of the nature trail at Mountain View and added Tick Awareness signs along the trail.

I then posed questions to the other three boys that were seated. I asked Travis Bridgeman, "What impact do you think Scouting has on your community"? Travis responded, "Scouting has always provided a variety of services for the benefit of communities across the nation. It is a beacon of hope for those in times of trouble. It provides guidance for the young members of the community. Scouting has molded this community into a group of close, compassionate individuals, and will continue to provide a warm guiding light for those in need."

I then asked Bill Heiss, "What do you think is a strong community and why do you think it is important"? Bill answered, "A strong community is a group of people that live an honest and kind life. A strong Community should have a strong police force, an elite group of fire fighters, and a reliable hospital. It would also have a source of food and clean source of water. It is important because a strong community should be able to help each other out in an emergency, and enjoy each other's company in a happy event".



I then asked Riley Potter , “What would you like to do with the church in the future.”? Riley’s response was “We were planning on doing more fund raising with or for the church and maybe have more scout Sundays like this ,to be closer to the church. We would like to coordinate more ways to get involved in events with the church.”

It was great to have the boys there and hear their views and the church gave them a round of applause for their dedication.

The scouts then assisted with ushering at offering time.

At the end of the service, the scouts helped the congregation make a circle around the sanctuary and all joined together singing scout vespers, the song that scouts close camping trips, meetings, etc. with. We then all joined opposite hands as the scouts would and Will offered the Benediction.

As the chartered organization representative of the scouts ,I was proud of the boys willingness to do whatever was asked of them .We were glad to have the scouts a part of our service this day and are proud of the young men these boys are growing up to be.

Craig Stout



Annual Meeting January 27, 2019

The Annual Meeting was held following church on Sunday, January 27, 2019. Moderator Dave Schulte called the meeting to order. Reports were made following the order in the Annual Report. For the most part, there were no additional comments to each report. Some areas are of note.

*Most of the hail damage repairs of the church have been completed, with the roof being the most recent. As of December 31, 2018, the church has received \$136,960.92. Julie Gardner has just sent in more invoices to the insurance company to be further reimbursed.

*The committee nominees as listed in the Annual Report were elected.

*The Stewardship Committee had the group break into 4 small groups where goals for the next few years were suggested. These will be compiled and shared at a pot luck on February 24 after church.

*It was discovered that the church's official name was First Congregational Society of Harford and had been adopted in 1932. Since that time different variations of that name have been used on both official and informal documents. After much discussion and various suggestions, the name voted on and adopted was

Harford First Congregational Church-UCC

Ellen Holdredge, Acting Clerk

Trustee Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2019

New Business

Binghamton Slag Roofing has left some black marks on the siding and knocked the spotlight out of alignment on the church and needs to come back

Kandy would like her number removed from the church fire system call list. Who is being called? Gary will check with the company to see who is on the list currently and then we will find someone to add.

There is an electric baseboard heater under the pew in the back of the church and is rusty. It should be painted.

Areas where the roof leaked in the church need to be cleaned and painted. We will find a painter.

Can Terry Kavetski wrap the outdoor corner boards of the church with aluminum so they no longer have to be painted?

Gutters and downspouts were supposed to be replaced after the hail storm, but we never received a price from BSR to do the work. Harry will try to get a price.

S&M Lawncare sent a letter to inform us that there would be no increase for lawn mowing services this year.

Old Business

Wax has been cleaned off new church cushions

A special committee would be formed to investigate putting a full basement under the lecture hall.

Missionary

2-19-19

Least Coin Report: Nettie Dueck of Canada and her family hosted students from many other countries, cultures and religions. After spending a year with each student they became like a family member. Later in her life she and her husband visited these students and their families becoming close with them. Her message is that all children are God's children.

Missionary Board: The Missionary Board that Dorothy Greene originally designed has been updated.. All missions that are current have stars on them but the past missions remain on the board to show history.

CHE: The Nicaraguan CHE representative is coming to Montrose February 23. Four will attend from Missionary.

Election Day Bake Sale – May 21 at the Fire Hall: We will continue to hold bakes sales on Election Day. This bake sale will go to support the Clean Water Project through Samaritan's Purse.

Project Status: Woman's Resource Center – will check on current needs

Summer Lunch Program – will continue to collect Peanut Butter and monitor needs

CHE: will hold bi-annual yard sales

Samaritan's Purse: Clean Water Project (Bake Sale)

CareNet: \$100 in September of each year

Soup Ministry: Monitor soup levels

Red Cross Blood Drive: will check on a Blood Drive

Next Meeting: March 19 at 1:00



The Nicaraguan CHE (Community Health Evangelism) Women's Ministry Leader, Darling, and the coordinator of the Nicaraguan Christian Church, Pastor Jorge. They were visiting the area to meet with their Christian partners in missions. Ann Thomkins (far left) is our Nicaraguan liaison and translator.

Willing Worker Big Group Minutes

February 6, 2019

JoAnn Titus, Vice president, called the meeting to order. Ellen read devotions. Minutes were approved as printed. Sharon Kinney presented the treasurer's report the roast beef dinner made a profit of \$2615. \$130 worth of knives were sold.

OLD BUSINESS:

It appears that hail storm damage repair has been completed, so it was decided that the committee that was going to investigate cupboards for under the counter in the Gathering Room would get back to work.

Kandy has talked to Jason Miller about the future of the Old Log Cabin and the changes that are coming. She has indicated to him that we need shelves (can they be attached to the sides?) and many outlets (we'd like a say in where they go) plus electric in the ceiling for ceiling fans. Kandy has wondered if there was a barebones log kit that could be purchased by us and used. In exchange, we would not pay rent until it was paid off. We would like to keep some logs but have no idea what kind of shape they are in. In the end, we aren't sure of how much say we will have in anything. When fair time arrives, we need to look closely at the existing metal buildings and make notes so that we are ready for realistic suggestions that meet our needs.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sherry Decker received a bill for a full page fair book ad-\$140. That will be paid. New this year was a \$60 deposit so they know we are coming. That will be paid, too.

March 13 is the Lenten Service at our church. Each group needs to provide 3 pies.

March 31 the Catholic Choir and Mt View Chimettes will be performing in the sanctuary at 3PM. Each group was asked to provide 5 dozen cookies.

GROUP REPORTS:

Each group helped at roast beef dinner and provided pies, helped at annual meeting luncheon, helped at Frankel funeral lunch, collected Least Coin

North Harford: 5 present, held a Christmas luncheon, 2 meetings, made crafts, donated \$200 to Heather Warren and donated soup they bought to Missionary Society, bake sale coming.

Harford: 2 present, Christmas lunch at Ivie's, \$100 to Susquehanna County CYS.

Kingsley: went out to eat at Christmas with unwilling workers, made soup for annual meeting, held a craft making meeting, sent \$100 to Heather Warren, bought Interfaith Christmas gift.

Next meeting is Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 7:00PM in the Lecture Hall. North Harford is hostess.

Deacons February 11, 2019

-Kay shared that she felt the Candy bags distributed for Valentine's Day were a hit and we will do it again.

-Winter Picnic- Kay asked if Craig could get 3 packs of 24 pack hot dogs and rolls at Aldis for the potluck.

-Where to put the communion box was discussed and it was decided the box will be hung underneath the plate in the Narthex.

-Bonnie brought up the idea of having the church be a site for a mobile pantry that is currently serving people in Montrose on Fridays at the Montrose Methodist Church. Bonnie will get more information about how many volunteers would be needed to help when the pantry comes.

-**Ash Wednesday**-March 6th, 7 pm Ushers/Greeters will be Ginny, Tammy, Kay and David (?)

-**Lenten Service**- March 13th, 7 pm Tammy will send an email to all Deacons looking for ushers and greeters (6 total)

-**Good Friday**- April 19th-7 pm- discussion tabled until March 11th Deacons meeting.

-Bonnie has been in touch with Maxine to discuss backdrop and set decorations for Easter pageant

-Will brought up the idea of a "Pet in Church" occasionally. Laurie Demark (ARC spokesperson will be responsible for organizing occasional visits from adoptable pets from Laura's Hope and True Friends. The pet will be introduced and blessed during worship. This will be done in hopes of helping our furry friends find forever homes. Bonnie suggested a donation basket be set out to collect donations for True Friends and Laura's Hope. Will said this idea would need to go through Stewardship first.

-Kay stated that she would like all Deacons to choose a "job" to be responsible for this year.

It was decided that until Kay has complete job descriptions for each job it is difficult to decide what job best suits each Deacon. She will get the job descriptions done for the next meeting. Kay did state that each Deacon will be responsible for serving as Council Rep at least 1 x during the year.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Next meeting is March 11th @ 7pm

Bell Choir Rebirth!!!!!!

Bob DeLuca has graciously volunteered to conduct a bell choir.
Please call or email Bob if you would be interested in participating.

570-498-7090 gepetto@nep.net



Stewardship Minutes January 17, 2019

Pastor Will opened with prayer reading Luke Chapter 2 asking how we see and find salvation.

There is a date change of the church service in the lecture hall. It will be held on February 24 followed by “food and fellowship”. Meat will be provided by the Deacons with covered dishes brought by the attendees to round out the meal.

Julie explained and answered questions concerning her thorough and comprehensive financial report for the past year. Despite having some hefty expenditures at the end of the year, Julie looks to 2019 with confidence in the church’s ability to meet our financial obligations. Some of the categories in the 2018 budget were over budget while others were considerably under budget.

Julie opened a discussion of how we might invest the church’s money into a more lucrative fund than a bank savings account.

Some questions and concerns included:

1. Should we have a financial planner?
2. Do other churches have financial planners? Will was going to check with Bonnie Bates, Penn N.E. Conference Minister.
3. What fees are charged and how much are they?
4. We need to be able to make withdrawals; are there fees when money is withdrawn?
5. Should we take out CD’s, is there a minimum amount which must be invested?

Peg Empet will contact several financial investors for information on what each offers which we can discuss and decide and suggest the best route for the church’s investments.

A Pay Pal account will be set up for the convenience of those who wish to contribute money online.

The remainder of the meeting centered on the annual meeting January 27 during which we will gather ideas for future goals of the church. Stewardship decided that dividing into small groups of approximately 10 with a facilitator and recorder would be the best way to accomplish this. In a 10-15 minute session, each participant will have the opportunity to list goals on a sheet of paper, indicating their top priority. These suggestions and comments will be presented at the February Stewardship meeting. The February Spire will include the goals and priorities suggested by the annual meeting attendees.

“Recognition Sunday”, an outreach idea of Stewardship, was decided upon to recognize individuals and/or groups with the church or community on the first Sunday of each month throughout 2019.

Kay asked once again for us to develop a church calendar of monthly events throughout the year. The calendar serves as a reminder and schedule of upcoming events. With Kay’s persistence and guidance, we “got ‘er done”.

Will closed the meeting with prayer before we set off safely for home as snow was beginning to fall.



Christian Education Minutes February 4, 2019

Pastor Will's class has been going into town passing candy bars. Bonnie and Kandy have been sharing lessons with the older children while Kay has been doing the nursery.

A discussion about The Bible in A Year curriculum which we've been doing isn't helping the children; so we are going back to the beginning and starting with stories from the old and new testaments rather than have the children learn the books of the Bible. After they have learned the stories then it will be more advantageous for them to learn the books and the order they are in. Ecclesiastes will be finished by the end of February and the stories such as Noah and others will begin.

The children have made blessing jars and are adding to them weekly. Some of those blessings will be shared each week during joys and concern time.

The Easter pageant which was presented last year will once again be done this year. Maxine Cramer, a friend of Bonnie's, is going to build the tomb for the pageant. Thank you Bonnie for contacting Maxine and her willingness to do this for us. The pageant will be presented on April 21st during the 11 AM service. Come and join us in celebrating Jesus' resurrection.

October 20th will be a special day. The children will be doing the entire service. The day is known as Children's Sabbath. A teacher's aide named Carly will be here to celebrate with us and saying a prayer of protection for the children she and others help.

The meeting ended in prayer. Next meeting is March 4th at 6:30

St. Patrick's Day

Leprechauns, fairies, banshees, goblins, and many other magical creatures are woven into the folklore and legends of Ireland. Ireland is known as the Emerald Isle. Shamrocks, a three leaf plant, is said to have been used by St. Patrick to represent the trinity.



St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland began his life in Britain. He was taken at age 16 by Irish raiders and sold into slavery in Ireland. He escaped after six years and was reunited with his family. He read a letter from a book entitled, Confessio. While reading the letter he seemed to hear the Irish calling him to walk once more with them. He felt he was inadequate to the task because of shortcomings in his education. He eventually did return to Ireland and wandered far and wide baptizing and confirming with great zeal.

There are many legends surrounding St. Patrick. One of the most famous is he drove the snakes of Ireland into the sea and that is why Ireland has no snakes to this day. On this St. Patrick's Day, "May the luck o' the Irish be with you."

Spire Sponsor

In Loving

Memory of

Fay Button

02/01/1920– 12/25/17

Prudence Clark

03/22/1915– 02/18/10

Deacons meeting minutes January 14, 2019

A prayer from Psalm 144: 12-15 opened the meeting.

Among the topics discussed were: the upcoming worship in the lecture hall, Valentine's Day presentation to the congregation, congregation-wide support of the fire company's breakfast, a community dinner, Penn Northeast Conference Minister Bonnie Bates coming to speak, sermon series in February entitled, "Time to Love", Lenten services, and what we did worship-wise in 2018.

February 24, 2019, we will be having worship service in the lecture hall. There will be a potluck lunch following the service. The theme is a "Winter Picnic". Meat, plates, silverware, and drinks will be provided. Everyone who attends can bring side dishes as we have many wonderful cooks and bakers in our congregation.

There was a lively discussion about Valentine's Day and what to present to the congregation. It was decided some Hershey's kisses in a bag with a tag saying, "Yes, Jesus loves you". Pastor Will volunteered to get the bags and Kay will make up the tags. The bags will be assembled February 3rd after service. The children from Sunday School will pass them out on February 10th.

A congregation-wide support of the monthly fire company's breakfast was another wonderful discussion. The fire company support a lot of church activities so it was felt the congregation should show their support by attending the April 7th breakfast. Two seating of 8:45 and 9:45 were thought to be sufficient. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board so the fire company will know when to expect a larger crowd. An announcement will also go in the Spire and the bulletin.

A community dinner free of charge was the next agenda item. It was decided the dinner would be advertised in The Spire, bulletin, flyers made up and placed in post offices, banks, put on the Facebook community page, and the drug store. March 30th from 5-7 was the date picked for this event. Dinner will be spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, jello and cookies, and drinks. A sign-up sheet will be placed on the bulletin board for donations of spaghetti and all the fixings. A snow date of April 6th for this event is on the calendar.

Our Penn Northeast Conference Minister Bonnie Bates will be here on September 29th. We will have worship service in the lecture hall and have a potluck after so she can taste our wonderful cooking here at First Congregational. Come and join us.

Pastor Will's sermon series in February will be entitled, "Time to Love". We will use the bulletins we already have and the Sunday School children are making posters to hang behind the pulpit for this series celebrating God's great love for us and all mankind.

Our congregation will be hosting a Lenten service on March 13th at 7:00. Many pies or cookies will be needed for this event. I know our Willing Workers will do their usual magic to provide these luscious desserts.

Worship-wise in 2018 the Deacons did many things; among them were a soup and foot washing on Maundy Thursday, display of photos on Mother's and Father's Day, a rededication of the sanctuary, and the Christmas Eve service.

The meeting ended with prayer. The next meeting is February 11, at 7:00. Hope to see you then.

The Susquehanna County Library

We have received a request from Linda Whitney. The Susquehanna County Library has an American Girl program. One may check out an American Girl doll. The small tops from spray bottles are included in the supplies that travel with the American Girl. The American Girl uses them for drinking glasses.

Would you please save any small tops from spray bottles that you may have. Leave them in the office and Judy will deliver them to Linda.

If you have any American Girl size doll ideas I would love to hear from you.

Thanks so much. Linda Whitney

Lwhitney7678@yahoo.com 570-434-2918



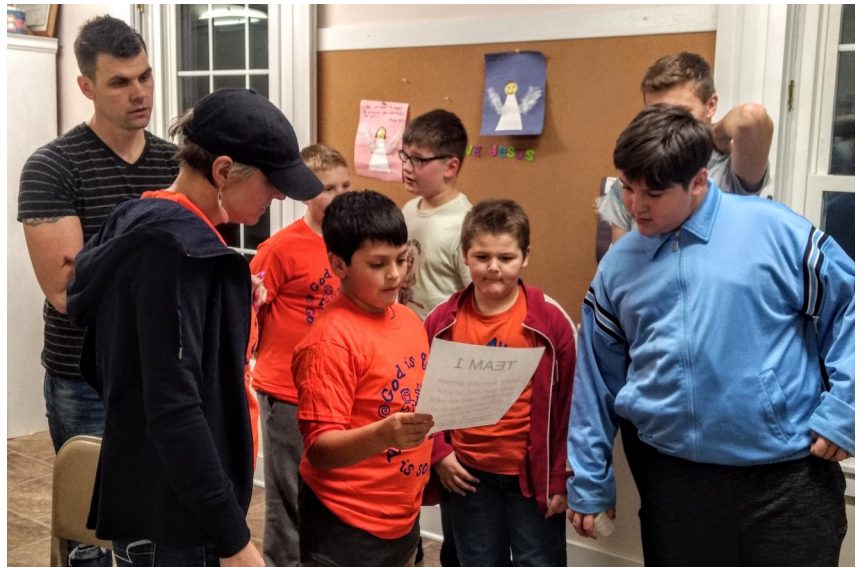
GAME ON



GAME ON has enjoyed seeing some new faces join us the last few weeks.

We spent time at a recent get together learning about " Loving our Neighbors".

The kids joined together in a scavenger hunt to find and read scripture and then search for puzzle pieces, which when put together spelled out a special message for all of us-"Love your Neighbor"





The kids also made up Valentine treat bags to share with a friend or neighbor and received chapstick with Ephesians 4:29 printed on it which reminds us to "Let everything we say be good and helpful".

We welcomed a crew of 28 kids and several adults to join us for a night of great fun at P3 Extreme air park in Vestal on the 22nd. After using up some of their energy we gathered for some fellowship and pizza!



GAME ON would love to have you join us for future events. Our next GAME ON will be on March 8th from 6-8 at Harford First Congregational Church.

For more information please contact Tammy Stout or Jennica Drake.

GAME ON GOES TO P3 TRAMPOLINE PARK

On Friday, February 21 Game on crew descended on P3 Trampoline park in Vestal for some Jumping fun. They offer Dodgeball, Swinging on silks, Tightrope, balance beam with or without jousting pads, basketball, ninja warrior course, foam pit, all on trampolines! Needless to say, all the kids were non-stop doing all that they had to offer. After Jumping, the kids had a pizza party in a room there at the place with drinks and Mrs. Bonham made sure they had Caramel corn and cookies . As you can see by the pictures, a good time was had by all. Thank you for your continued support of Game On and its Outreach Ministry.



Spire Sponsor
Carol Oakley





ARC Animal Resource Center

ARC recently helped a family with Comet, a dog who digested enough dangerous pills by accident that he spent a couple of days in a nearby emergency vet hospital. Comet's health was in jeopardy, but the blonde lab is pulling through. The family has sent a heartwarming thank you already. They are grateful for the kindness the church has shown them at a significant time of need. Our contribution to the costly stay was significant.

The Deacons recently okayed "Blessed for Success," an Adoptable Pet Recognition Day in church. We are hoping this recognition will take place on Sunday, March 17th. The Pet Day will feature an adoptable cat from True Friends Animal Shelter in Montrose. Look for publicity pictures if we can get them! Perhaps we can do more Recognition Days in the future.

A woman who rescues feral cats received food from an ARC contributor. This woman moved to a country home nearly 3 years ago. It didn't take her long to discover that there were already "tenants" there—she discovered several feral cats living under her porch. Since last Thanksgiving, even more have migrated to her home. They travelled there after an elderly man caring for forty plus feral cats dispersed after he passed away.

This woman we have helped now lovingly cares for 13 feral cats, building shelters and providing heat on her porch. She worries when they are missing. She has a running tab at a local vet who has spayed and neutered most of them, treated them for horrible situations including pulling teeth, missing jaw, missing paws and has to euthanize when there were no options. The vet bills and purchase of food have overwhelmed her a bit with her husband being laid off for winter. This woman asks for no money. This is her gift. We are happy to help her as we can.

The teens who started the idea of ARC will be looking for another fundraiser. Discussions will be begin before this Spire is in circulation.

Thank you all for your prayers, support, kindness and love.

Laurie DeMark, ARC chairperson





January 23, 2019

Dear Partners in Christ:

The vision of a body united - in purpose, in mission, in vision - is one that inspired the birth of our denomination. All of our spiritual impulses reverberate in an effort to call us into a more perfect union. Throughout our shared history as a people of faith and as a part of the Body of Christ, we have challenged ourselves to widen the circle of inclusion. Widening the circle has always come with growth pains as we shed old skins and welcome those whom we had previously thought unwelcome. And, with each new articulation of a more fully expressed Body of Christ we have realized new joy. Through it all we remain focused on the call to be one and committed to meeting the challenges inherent in that call.

We are now living in and through a season when the threats to unity are legion. Talk of walls that mark refugees as threats, labels like 'terrorist' that attach too easily to Muslims, overt racial bias that normalizes fear and hatred, a pandemic of abuse to women with the trigger reflex to forgive the men who author that abuse have turned America into a land many of us no longer recognize and that too many of us are finding harder and harder to reconcile with our faith.

Now more than ever, the Holy Spirit of the Living God and the Risen Christ is seeking to partner with anyone committed to unifying the human community. The gospel mandate to love our neighbor as we love ourselves resonates deep within us. It calls for the better angels among and within us to always resist impulses to hate, to condemn, to vilify, or to castigate. In such a time as this, the United Church of Christ's call to fulfill the prayer of Jesus, that they may all be one, stands as an urgent mandate to disciples who envision a just world for all.

United with you in God's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John C. Dorhauer".

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Officers of the Church

Rev. John C. Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Rev. Traci D. Blackmon
Associate General Minister
Justice and Local Church Ministries

Rev. James A. Moos
Associate General Minister
Global Engagement and Operations
Co-executive for Global Ministries

700 Prospect Avenue East, Cleveland, Ohio 44115-1100 | 866.822.8224 | ucc.org

Correspondence

From Martha Jenkins at HVA

To First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Thanks so much for your gift of a turkey. I finally got everyone to agree on having a turkey dinner. Everyone enjoyed it very much. We have some left. Lance helped me with the turkey or I should say he did most of the work. He likes to cook. Thank God because I was his helper. I couldn't ask for a better cook. Everyone came and got full. We still have some leftovers which we are going to take care of very soon. Thanks again. Everyone also made a dish so we had a lot of food. Judy thanks a lot and the church for thinking of us.

Your Friends, Martha Jenkins, Joyce Alexander, Robert Alexander, James O'Dell, Betty Deirn, June Goodrich, Mary Bicherson, Peggy Mac Creary, Bob Coe, Lance R Tobaba, Joan Dodds, Bev Tiffany, Alvin Miller, Linda Miller.

To my First Church Family,

Thank you for your continued warm thoughts and prayers during my recovery. I am very grateful. I am doing okay with my treatments, and they will be scanning my progress this week.

Love,

Heather Warren

Adult Fellowship D & L Restaurant in Nicholson Route 11 March 17, 2019

Please sign up in the Gathering Room or call the office to sign up to go to lunch on Sunday March 17, 2019 at 1:00.

We will need to let them know how many are coming by March 10, 2019. (Deadline for signing up)



March Birthdays

March 01	Barbara Weideman
March 03	Katherine Masters Doolittle Kassandra Lamberson
March 04	Dorothy Greene
March 05	Erika Lewis Gething Gina Yarrish
March 07	Dale Grant
March 10	Nicholas (Weideman's great grandson)
March 11	Cindy Millard Galambos Judy Mitchell
March 12	Scott Muller Lyra Brosius
March 14	Harry & Julie Gardner Ethan Rodriquez
March 20	Linda Arthur
March 22	Liz Grant Peg Empet
March 25	Gus Ferrara
March 26	Bob and Denise Finagan



Susquehanna County Library Help

Do you every shop at ShurSave Supermarket?



One may register their ShurSave Gold Card at the store's customer service counter or online (www.shursavemarkets.com-programs/Gold Card Program)

The Susquehanna County Library will receive \$.03 for each can or package of these brands: Best Yet, Nature's Finest, Top Care, Domestix, Academix and others not mentioned in the newspaper article. Hopefully you will be able to sign up on your next shopping trip or from your computer.

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.

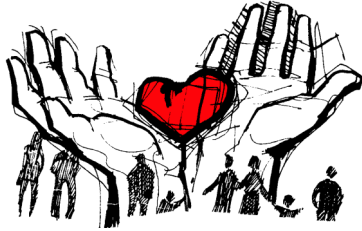
Worship Assistants

Greeters

March 3 Kay Gow
March 10 Evan Clarkson
March 17 Karen Jones
March 24 Priscilla Allen
March 31 Alice Archer

Ushers

March 3 Bailey Millard & Mikeala Stout
March 10 Bill & Holli Chichester
March 17 Sharon Decker & Payton Colwell
March 24 Bonnie Love & Payton Colwell
March 31 Rich & Shirley Masters



Readers

March 3 Evan Clarkson
March 10 Gus Ferrara
March 17 Gary Housel
March 24 Bonnie Love Cowell
March 31 Charlene Batzel

Memorial Plaque Information

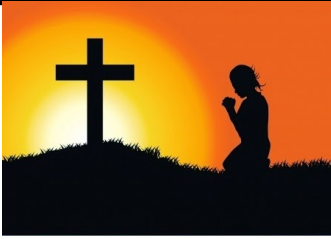
Are you interested in having a plaque attached to the memorial stone in the memorial garden?
One may have a plaque ordered by doing the following: Cost---\$25.00

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.



**Notice: Please send all material for the Spire to
Firstchurchspire@gmail.com
by the 15th of each month**



Prayer Concerns

Nicholas (Great Grandson of the Weidemans)
 Patrick Simons
 Scott Klenk
 Nancy Marr
 Heather Warren
 Sandy Zupanovich
 Alice Watkins
 Dorothy Greene
 Sandy Paolucci
 David Hoadley and daughter
 Wyatt Parsons

Rev. Ghulan Nasrani
 Ralph Biesecker
 Sammy
 Gail Batzel's mom
 Paula Millard's grandmother, June
 Mrs. Hickey
 Pastor Peg
 Jackie and Bill Keller
 Ivie Simons
 Katheryn Burdick
 Larry Herbert
 Steven and Sharon Decker
 the grieving group
 our military and their families
 our nation under God
 our government
 Sydney Ann (Gamble) Mead
 Urda Family
 Kathy Kelly
 Tom Moser
 Brad Paige

Home Bound

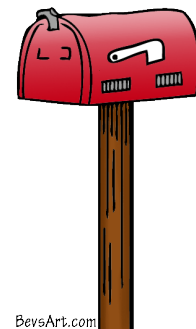


The Carey Family
 Dorothy Greene
 Alice Watkins

Catherine Escandel
 Barbara Pease

Address and Directory Change/Additions

Lynnette J. Millard
 2810 Stephens Road
 New Milford
 PA 18834
 Tel: 570-396-4325



BevsArt.com

First Congregational Giving Calendar 2019

January		July 07	Food Pantry, Game-On & Missionary recognition
February 03	Scout Sunday	14	Communion
10	KWW Soup Sale	28	Celebrate Grandparents day
	Installation of Committees		
17	Fire Co. Chicken BBQ		
	NHWW Bake Sale	August 04	Log Cabin, Ugly Quilts, & WW Recognition
24	Worship service in the LH	18-24	Log Cabin-Harford fair
	Potluck Winter Picnic	22	Dining Hall Dinner
March 03	Council officers & Chairs recognition	September 01	Stewardship, Trustees, & Deacons recognition
06	Ash Wednesday Service		
10	Girl Scout Sunday	15	Fall Festival
	KWW Soup Sale	22	Rain date/fall festival
13	Rt 81/11 Ministerium Lenten Service		Lecture hall worship
30	Community Dinner 5:00-7:00	29	Conference Minister-Bonnie Bates & potluck-"Leaves are Falling"
31	Catholic Choral & Mt. View Chimnettes Concert 3:00		
April 06	Snow Date for community Dinner	October 06	World Wide Communion
07	Church-wide support for Fire Company's breakfast		Begin winter clothing collection
19	Good Friday Service	20	Pledge campaign begins
21	Easter Sunrise Service/Lilies	27	Children's Sabbath
	Easter Pageant		Police/first responders recognition
28	Ch Ed & Teachers Recognition Sunday		HVA Halloween Party 1:00-3:00
May 05	Choir Recognition	November 02	Pet Blessing 9:00-11:00
12	Begin Peanut Butter Collection	03	Financial Secretary/Treasurer recognition
	Summer Clothing Collection	10	Pledge Campaign ends
	Mother's Day	16	Roast Beef Dinner
17-18	Missionary Yard Sale	24	KWW bake sale
19	Communion		Tree lighting
21	Election Day		End Winter clothing collection
	Missionary Bake Sale at Fire Hall	29-30	Cocoa collection begins
June 01	Summer Lunch Box Chicken BBQ		Christmas in Montrose
02	Community Leaders Recognition		Missionary Yard Sale
09	End Peanut butter Collection	December 01	Pastor, church secretary, council President recognition
	LH worship & potluck "Summer Fun"		Interfaith gift Tags
16	Father's Day		Poinsettias
30	Golf Tournament	08	End Cocoa Drive
		24	Christmas Eve Service

On Going collections/drives: Food Pantry, Our Church's Wider Mission, & CWS Disaster Kits

March Penance Calendar

2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Please make checks payable to :	The Harford Missionary Group First Congregational Church				1 Did March come in like a lion or lamb? Lamb: 25 cents Lion: 50 cents	2 5 cents for every different type of bird seen.
3 Did you go to church today? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	4 Did it snow today? Yes: 50 cents No: 25 cents	5 It's Mardi Gras. Wear a costume or mask. Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	6 Did you go to Ash Wednesday services? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	7 Did you look at Facebook today? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	8 5 cents for every bed in your home.	9 Did the sun shine today? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents
10 Day Light Saving Did you spring forward? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	11 What is the shortest verse in the Bible? John 11:35 25 cents/word	12 Give 50 cents for every TV.	13 Count your blessing. 1 cent each	14 How many books in the New Testament? 1 cent per book	15 Did you go online today? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	16 1 cent for every year you have lived.
17 St. Patrick's Day Did you wear green? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	18 1 cent for every window in your home.	19 Pay up for pets: 10 cents per turtle 20 per bird 30 per cat	20 Spring has Sprung! Are the crocuses coming up? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	21 What river was Jesus baptized in? Mark 1:9 5 cents per letter	22 What is the longest book in the Bible? Psalms 1 cent per chapter/book	23 How many books in the Old Testament? 1 cent per book
24 Give 1 cent for every person in church. Didn't go: 50 cents	25 How old was Moses when he died? Deuteronomy 34:7 1 cent per year	26 1 cent for every penny in your purse or pocket.	27 25 cents for every child 20 cents for every grandchild 10 cents for every great	28 Who was lowered in a basket through a hole in a wall? Acts 9:25 10 per letter	29 50 cents for every pet dog.	30 Did you have company this month? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents
31 Did you go to the Lenten Concert? Yes: 25 cents No: 50 cents	Thank you for your Participation!!!					

March 2019

March 2019

April 2019

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

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb 24	25	26	27	28	Mar 1	2
					Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH)	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Service (Sanctuary) 7:00pm 9:00pm Scouts (LH)	9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 7:00pm 10:00pm Fair m	9:15am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR)	NO Scouts 5:15pm 6:45pm Armettas 7:00pm 8:00pm ASH Wed service (Sanctu		NO Yoga Pastor day off 6:00pm 8:00pm GAME ON (LH)	
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9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Service (Sanctuary) 12:00pm 12:30pm KW 7:00pm 9:00pm Scouts	9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office	7:30am 9:00am Men's brkfst (Binghams) 9:15am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (NO SCOUTS SPIRE DEADLINE 5:15pm 6:45pm Armettas 7:00pm 8:00pm Lenten		Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH)	10:00am 3:00pm LH in use
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Service (Sanctuary) 7:00pm 9:00pm Scouts (LH)	9:30am 10:30am 9:30 mtg (PO) 4:00pm 5:30pm Pastor in office 6:00pm 7:30pm Girl Sc	9:15am 1:00pm Ugly Quilts (LH) 7:00pm 8:00pm Choir (MR)	10:00am 1:00pm KWW (LH) 5:15pm 6:45pm Armett 6:00pm 8:00pm Scouts 7:00pm 8:00pm Lenten	6:30pm 8:00pm Council (LH)	Pastor day off 9:30am 10:30am Yoga (LH) 6:00pm 8:00pm GAME ON (LH)	10:00am 8:00pm Dinner-Spaghetti (LH)
31	Apr 1	2	3	4	5	6
9:30am 10:30am SS 11:00am 12:00pm Service (Sanctuary) 3:00pm 5:00pm Catholi 7:00pm 9:00pm Scouts						

2/24 - 3/1

3/3 - 8

3/10 - 15

3/17 - 22

3/24 - 29

3/31 - 4/5

2019
LILY ORDER FORM

Please order:

_____ lily plants at \$ 6.50 = \$ _____ (total price)

Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

“DEADLINE April 07, 2019”

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

Mail order and payment to:

First Congregational-UCC

P. O. Box 217

Harford, PA 18823

2019
LILY ORDER FORM

Please order:

_____ lily plants at \$ 6.50=\$ _____ (total price)

Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

“DEADLINE April 07, 2019”

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

Mail order and payment to:

First Congregational-UCC

P. O. Box 217

Harford, PA 18823



Non-Profit Organization

US Postage Paid

PERMIT—#20

Montrose, PA 18801

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
5016 Creek Road
PO Box217
Harford, PA 18823
Tel.570-434-2260
Email: firstch@nep.net
Spire email: firstchurchspire@gmail.com
Web URL: <http://www2.nep.net/~firstch/>

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

Isaiah 9:2

Join Us Each Sunday!!



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

Judy Mitchell –Sec
Hours: Tues. 1-5 pm
Thurs or Fri 11am -