

WHY DO YOU LOOK FOR THE LIVING
AMONG THE DEAD?

HE IS NOT HERE:

HE HAS RISEN!

LUKE 24:5-6

Our Spire

Volume 40

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Number 3

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

Online Worship: you were there when you weren't. Honest!

When I think back on the first completely online worship service that was shared via the internet on Sunday morning, March 22nd, I hope to always remember this. It's something that may at first seem surprising—or weird—but it was neither surprising nor weird. In fact, it was beautiful, even reassuring. There, in a mostly empty church save for four other people (three musicians and a videographer), you, the congregation, were “there” with me while I gave the sermon. It's true. It honestly felt as if you were there seated in pews around the sanctuary.

Some of you may think I've really lost it this time, or that my overly active imagination was at it again, but I will argue differently. I will say that somehow you really were there. I cannot explain this fully. There is no way I can do this, actually, but I was not alone when the Word of God and the following sermon were shared.

The Holy Spirit guided that entire worship service. I'm certain of it. Watch it, or revisit it. The link is right here if you haven't seen it. <https://youtu.be/qMxCjOiyqV4>. It LOOKED like you were there. It SOUNDED like you were there. To me, it FELT like you were there.

And somehow you were. There is no ‘somehow’ really. It was all God. And it was you. There. When we recorded and the sermon flowed, I looked into your faith, the memory of your faces, and the reception I get when I preach without a script with you. And it was all there. Just as it is every Sunday we are together.

I know. *Amazing!* I wish I could tell you something was written that day. With the exception of those few announcements, nothing was penned. It wasn't until I sat in the center chair that I found Psalm 46. Not a single prayer was even scribbled in front of me. It. Was. All. God. And you.

See, the sermons are the sermons because of you. To help show you what I mean, here's an example. Theater artists will share that different ‘houses’ help (or maybe even hurt) a show. Professionals say there is a chemistry of some sort between the actor onstage and the audience. This comes somewhat close to what I'm trying to say here, but there is so much more happening at Harford First Congregational-UCC than chemistry. It's Christ.

A year or so ago, Tammy Stout once recorded something I tried to do from the pulpit. It was the same setup. She had the camera. I had an idea I wanted to convey from the pulpit while you, the congregation, were not there. Somehow that recording botched. It was all on me. We stopped 5- to 8-minutes into it. Actually, I stopped 5- to 8-minutes into it because I just could not go on. I froze, stammered, stopped. Talking to you without you being there? Yeah. THAT didn't work!

But it did this time. Kindhearted Tammy being kindhearted Tammy suggested that I at least jot down notes for the March 22nd sermon. You know. Just in case. There were no notes. There was no time for notes, dear Christians. Literally. There. Was. No. Time. While I do not advocate flying from the seat of your pants, I will say that it works. Specifically, it works for us (for you and me). And it didn't just work once. It happens every time I preach not *to* you but *with* you.

To God be the glory, amen. And to you, the faithful, may there be glory, too. Because I am not alone. Ever. Yes, the Holy Spirit drives our worship services. You have heard me say this. Now I want you to know what is also a fact. You drive our worship services, too. You do. And you need to hear this in these never before charted days of being together when public safety keeps us apart. We were there. Somehow. We are not alone. Your presence was present. Your hopes filled the room. Your assurance in Christ resonated in the old wood, the sturdy pews. Your faith guided me through every word shared. And that, dear congregation, is as awesome as it gets.

We recorded the worship service on March 19th. I watched the sermon on Monday afternoon, March 23rd. There were times I looked up from my desktop screen at the snow-touched tranquility outside the windows as I listened. The peace of Christ was with me then just as it was with me when I was in the sanctuary.

I pray the same for you. I pray that as you watch these upcoming worship services under the CDC public safety ban that God leads you to the presence of our congregation around you and with you—literally with you. That there is more ‘there’ in your heart and in your soul than what can be seen. That it truly is communal worship. That the Spirit of our living God falls afresh on you and reminds you in ways you can never express that this church and its people, while incredibly imperfect, meet the perfect God in the perfect place, which is right under your skin.



If you can't be with us in person during worship here are a couple of options to watch us LIVE at 11 am.

1) Join us on our YouTube page (Recommended)

This will allow you to interact and Live Chat throughout the service if you have joys and prayers to share.

Here's how:

Click on YouTube on your device or computer

Search First Church Harford (our icon is a circle with a picture of the church in it)

Click on subscribe

At 11 am you will be able to click on the page and watch us live. If you would like to comment during the live streaming click on "Live Chat".

2) If for some reason you can not get on YouTube you can also click on the link that I will post here in the FB page. This will allow you to watch us LIVE but you will not be able to interact and comment during worship.

3) Each Friday a link will be sent out through church email. If you click on this link on Sunday at 11 this will also allow you to join us via live streaming.

Other ways to find archived worship videos.

- 1) All archived worship videos are posted to the church FB page within two days of the actual worship. Just click on the link and this will take you directly to the video.**
- 2) A link will be emailed out to the congregation from the church email within 2 days of the actual worship. Click on the link provided and this will take you directly to the video as well.**
- 3) Follow this link to our WebSite and to all Weekly messages and weekly worship**
<https://firstchurchharford.com/weekly-messages>

Social distancing isn't spiritual distancing

With the number of closings and restrictions coming to us from the CDC and our governor, we are all grieving these days. One area in our lives that can experience growth not grief is our spiritual lives through a practice of spiritual discipline. We can actually gain understanding, connection, wisdom and peace over fear, uncertainty, and anxiety.

Many of us could be thinking that when the words spiritual and discipline are set side by side that this unlikely duo is a misnomer. Spiritual and discipline? What? The two are complete opposites! Spiritual discipline? Isn't that an oxymoron? Spiritual is free, gratifying, and amazing. Anything spiritual is life- and soul-giving. It cannot be contained.

And discipline? That's hard, cumbersome work.

Spiritual discipline is an intentional practice. Anyone who has spent time considering and praying through Lent, for example, has practiced the intentionality of spiritual discipline.

Oswald Chambers offers an insight into what spiritual discipline is. He writes, "We can all see God in exceptional things, but it requires the culture of spiritual discipline to see God in every detail."

Chambers speaks to what we can all do (or are doing) during these troubling days: we can see where God is. We can use our particular circumstances or, even better, we can intentionally look beyond our own immediate strains and struggles to see where and how God is with us where we are. We can meditate on scripture. Here are two.

The first is James 1:2-4. "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

The second is Philippians 4:6-7. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

We can also repeat hymn lyrics or Christian music over and over and, in this spiritual discipline, experience a fullness of God we have not reached before. All of this, including an active prayer life, constitutes a spiritual discipline.

Perhaps in these stressful days you've disconnected with Christ, even temporarily. You are not alone. You may be socially distanced but never need to feel spiritually distanced.

Yes, without spiritual discipline it is easy to lose focus. Our hearts and heads can be pulled and pressed by temporal things. Yet with Christ, we can rejoice that we have a merciful and gracious God who, from love, is constantly, continually renewing us.

Returning to Lent, God is gently and assuredly reminding us of the great price paid for us. As we have to be socially distant at appropriate times now, we can take time to preach the gospel to ourselves. We can also take time to reflect upon Christ privately and, like Christ himself, go off and pray privately.

These uncertain times can make something absolutely certain for you, and that is that Your God is with you now and always.



COVID-19 and the inconvenient church

God didn't cause the Coronavirus to punish us. God isn't distant (or even absent) during this pandemic. God is however, at work. While I cannot speak for God, I do wonder what God is creating, or, perhaps more specifically, what God is creating and reimagining through us during these days of quarantine.

Churches have closed. This isn't a vacation for us Christians, a chance to lounge in our PJs on Sunday mornings and schlep around aimlessly. This is a way to figure out exactly how to be church without being church as we knew it.

I'm not doing cartwheels over a global health crisis; it's the opposite: I am looking at what Jesus is doing on His home turf, the church He built. You should be, too. When I cancelled our service for Sunday, March 22nd, I heard scuttlebutt such as: 1.) I want to sing in the choir, so I think we should have it. 2.) I want to make sure our congregation gets those Easter cards signed for shut ins and those who have been away from the congregation so I'm pretty upset about this. And 3.) Jesus didn't let the illness of others stop him. Why should we?

These voices are honest and legit. Those behind these comments (and others) should be honored and valued because these Christians care so deeply about the ministries the church does, and their allegiance—their faith—is showing. Faith seen is one beautiful thing.

So, in this time where churches aren't gathering, how are we gathering? How are we connecting? How is faith now seen, especially in a world where panic (or at least worry) runs rampant?

I can't speak for all pastors, but suggest what I have experienced with the pastors I have been blessed to work with firsthand. We are constantly addressing these questions. And these questions are good. And beyond these next weeks and months, these questions will not stop. Church has suddenly become inconvenient.

Welcome to the world the first Christians faced. They gathered when and where they could in a world not just unfriendly but hostile to them.

I remember a youth advocate in an awesome program for kids suddenly stopped because what had been going so well met a sudden challenge. Church would become uneasy. And she left. During one meeting, she just stopped. She hasn't been back.

If church had been easy, if it had been a once a week trip to Disney World, perhaps she'd still be doing a ministry she was not only very skilled at doing but also loved.

Church isn't easy, folks. It was never supposed to be. Now yes, church feeds your soul. Church (i.e. worship) is the place to rest from the weary world; it's the arsenal that equips you to face each day because the Word of God is never void; but it's never supposed to be convenient, easy, or comfortable. It's not supposed to be perfectly planned and timed—by us, anyway.

But it is driven by the Advocate, the Holy Spirit. [John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 and 1 John 1:9 are just some verses that speak to the presence of this Spirit.]

The Holy Spirit has never been contained. Church now isn't contained either. It hasn't stopped. In fact, when pressed, the church finds its way to thrive.

Lead by the Spirit of God, find where you're being inconveniently called. Let God be God through you, and the blessings of His ministries through you will show. This Coronavirus world needs God's blessings through you now. Go and do.

A Post COVID-19 Life

In 2001, your world changed about two weeks after mine did. In late August of that year, I moved from a sizeable farmhouse on a dead-end dirt road in Kingsley to a 653 square-foot apartment on over-crowded Commonwealth Avenue smack dab between Boston College and Boston University, my beloved alma mater. Yes, my whole everything changed as I moved from being a Pennsylvania farmer to a fulltime theology student.

And then that 9-11 morning came.

Everything changed after 9/11/2001.

Now sociologists (and hopefully fellow theologians) will be studying and coming out with information on the next new age, the post COVID-19 age. I call this new history point the era of social technology. I'm fine with someone giving it a fancier, more memorable name, but the following is true, isn't it? This unprecedented disaster has pushed us all further into social life online. And we're not going back—at least completely.

Online banking has been done by many now. It will soon be done by most. Online church giving will be the norm in the future. And online worship, the subject of my dissertation? That will be a norm, not an exception.

You can cringe at this. You can roll your eyes and long for days gone by, and I do advise a grieving period because yes, this is all so very painful. Yet there is more. God is changing us. God is inspiring us. Worship is reaching us in ways it has never reached us before. Family worship will no longer mean that those living in a close proximity will worship together. Now cousins from the four corners of the continental US can all be a part of one church.

That church may be ours.

We all know someone from our area if you're a native (or your area if you're a non-native) who has moved away from their hometown. Of course, this happens! Before leaving, they had an association with their local church. That association may have been profound or casual. Now, living in a new area far from where they likely graduated high school, that church from the past is still the church on their radar. It may be the only church on their radar.

That church can reach that individual now in profound ways, and I advocate for the church of today and tomorrow to be the church that makes Christ a part of the *wider* church community—even (or especially) when that church community member has a fulltime address seven or seventeen states away from Pennsylvania. Distance doesn't divide us anymore. The COVID-19 virus has taught us that.

Goodness, no one wants to consider a positive at this time of great loss, but the church that is facing incredible roadblocks and beats them by being present beyond a box on a Sunday morning is the church that likely excites not only God but also those who long for the church they know and love to reach them, not just continue to watch them go.

We are that church. And I couldn't be more thankful for those who continue to reach others with the Word of God by sharing our online resources regularly.

Continue to reach your family and friends by sharing what you see from us online. Our God is guiding us into tomorrow. And our God is good.

A Note From Stewardship

As the coronavirus pandemic sets in, churches are rushing to figure out how they will get their services out to their congregations. As I sat and watched and enjoyed our services on YouTube this morning, I thought how far ahead of the curve we are in this platform of communication. We started with Facebook live on a handheld phone for a while, and then invested in a streaming setup so we could easily stream our message through a video camera to YouTube to be broadcast on the web. Looking at the leaps and bounds we have taken into the future as a church, I am excited to wonder what the future will hold for us.

As we move into the cyber world more every day, the stewardship committee is met with the challenge of making sure all who engage in our church know the different ways of supporting the church with their gifts. How do you give? Many of us use the weekly envelope system that gives us an envelope for every week to put our donations in. Others use the collection plate on Sunday with a check or cash. But what about these times when we're not sure when we will have regular services? What if you live out of town? What if you watched our services online and would like to support us? Our answer to that is online giving. Simply visit our website at firstchurchharford.com and after checking out all we have to offer on our beautiful website, go back to the home page and click on the orange GIVE button in the upper right hand corner. In the next window click on the blue GIVE box on the left. That opens a new secure window to enter your information about your donation. You can even cover the costs of processing fees. This is a quick and easy way to make your donation. You can even make it recurring so you don't have to remember to go back every week! The other option is mailing your donation directly to the church at P.O. Box 217, Harford, Pa. 18823

That beautiful church that sits high atop the hills in Harford is there for you for baptisms, weddings and funerals. But the church is SO much more than that. And it takes everyone's time, talents and donations to make it what it is. As you know, we have a pledge drive every year. And every year our pledges are much shorter than our budget. We always put this in God's hands and finances usually balance themselves out. This year's budgets monthly target is \$12600. So far this year, we are approximately \$1100 short from target income. We are deeply concerned that this pandemic could be devastating to the church if these targets continue to be missed, especially if we are not in the sanctuary every Sunday in worship. We appreciate everyone's gifts of time and talents and as we can see on our website and on our online services, we have many different talents working together to serve the Lord.

Part of Stewardships responsibility is to help make sure we can continue to serve into the future. So please, do what you can to help us meet our financial goals for the future. Our church depends on it!

In light of the pandemic and many people out of work and struggling with their own households needs, we totally understand if you are struggling to make ends meet and can't meet your church obligations at this time. If that is the case, PLEASE know that your church family is here for you and PLEASE reach out to the church or Pastor Will if you have a need that can be filled, whether it be pastoring, food, or delivery of needed items.

May God be with you,

Craig Stout

Stewardship Chairperson

Next month we will look into what exactly is encompassed in the general fund.

Council Minutes (No meeting held)

Reports from committees

Treasurer's Report:

To make expenses every month in general (ex: electric, payroll, office and programs) we need \$12,597.92 a month to meet our budget for 2020.

Here is the Income and Expenses for February 2019 and 2020

| February | 2019 | February | 2020 |
|----------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| Income: | \$8,042.00 | Income: | \$11,759.50 |
| Expense: | \$9,470.13 | Expense: | \$9,698.63 |
| Total: | -\$1,428.13 | Total: | \$2,060.87 |

General Year to Date for 2020

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Income: | \$19,919.64 |
| Expense: | \$21,046.57 |
| Total: | -\$1,126.93 |

CE Minutes:

Topics discussed: Sunday School for the summer. A suggestion was made to have a church buddy, a person who will sit in the pew with the children (without parents to sit with them) during church. This is so the children could become used to sitting in church.

We will be returning to having SS at 9:30 in the fall so the teachers can once again attend the church service.

VBS was also discussed. Holli volunteered to contact other churches who have VBS and see what programs they are doing so we won't have the same one. Tammy suggested we contact Dana Barhite who runs the VBS at Clifford.

The last topic discussed was about changing the meeting to a date and time when Will could be present to have input for the meeting.

Next meeting is 29 March @ 9:30

Cradle Roll: 2 families received books on the child's birthday.

Deacons Minutes: March 8

The Deacons received a thank you note from the residents of the Harford Village Apartments for the lasagna dinner on February 22. The meal was much appreciated and a suggestion was made to have a cook-out this summer for the residents.

A date will be picked for the cook-out at April's meeting.

Will thanked the Deacons who assisted with the Lenten service on 4 March.

Kay asked for Deacons to attend the Community Dinner on March 28th to show support for the Youth and Outreach Ministry,

Will is asking for a church membership class to be held after Easter. He is asking for what should be incorporated in the class. David thought perhaps a journal could be given to those who attend the class to write their affirmations down and also perhaps having a letter of recommendation for seniors who apply to colleges to put with their applications. Bonnie also suggested a portfolio could be put together for seniors.

Easter card signing on March 22 after church. Refreshments will be available. Kay will provide crackers, cheese, and fruit. Melissa will bring a veggie tray. Bonnie will bring deviled eggs and be in charge of providing music.

Several comments have been heard about the Christmas tree in the Gathering Room. It was felt it was the change people were not used to, so the tree will be taken down after the Lenten Series is over.

Children's Sabbath/Grandparents Day on April 26th will include the SS children presenting three songs during the service. Discussion on what Will's class might do during the service and a suggestion was made perhaps they might do something with the older congregants. Will will check with his class and let us know at April's meeting.

Maundy Thursday service will be on April 9th @ 6:30. It will be held in the Lecture Hall. The theme for the service is No Panic-Let's Pray. Several Deacons will be prayer hosts for small groups of those attending the service to go to make their prayer requests known. The prayers will then be voiced, a song will be sung. Those who volunteered were Bonnie, Teresa, David, and Kay. Ginny will be an alternate if one of the others cannot be there.

Palm Sunday and Easter service were discussed. Kay will purchase palms from Marcho's Florist or Price Chopper. SS children will burn the palms from last year on Palm Sunday and mixed with the proper oil so they can be used for Ash Wednesday next year.

Next meeting is April 7th @ 5:00

Deacons: March 17

This meeting was called due to the Covid-19 Outbreak. We met in order to discuss upcoming worship services and what the church can do to help others.

The Deacons have decided to cancel worship for March 22 and 29, 2020 to follow the CDC's recommendation. The Deacons do not want to put anyone at risk and believe that by limiting the amount of people gathered, we can help stop the spread of this virus. We will reevaluate after March 29th to decide whether or not we need to continue to cancel service.

So, what can be done in the meantime?

Pastor Will and Judy will generate a list of those who may not have technology and may like to receive a paper copy of the sermon.

A prerecorded sermon will be posted to YouTube and Facebook every Sunday at 11:00AM.

We will ask the choir what they think about having a soloist for these services in order to minimize the number of people gathered at this time.

We will have an Open Church. There will be designated times during the week that people can come to the church as they feel fit. These times will be Sundays 10-11AM, Wednesdays 5-6PM & Fridays 8-9AM. Kay has offered to come and open the church and stay at this time. She will ask other Deacons to fill in if needed.

We also discussed how we can help those in our community. We decided that the Easter Card signing is very important at this time. Rather than gathering or having one person do all of the cards, it was decided that the cards will be divided up between Deacons to sign and send out on behalf of the church. Kay will divide up the list and leave them at the church for Deacons to pick up, sign, and send out. It was decided that the following statement should be included in each card:

On behalf of the entire Congregation, gathered as we are able, I am
praying for many Easter Blessings upon you this season.

Signed _____

We also generated a list of those that may need a phone call during the uncertain time. Please look for the list in a future email.

We could also help by delivering groceries to those who may not be able to get out at this time. Pastor Will will ask for volunteers that may be able to gather the groceries that someone may request and drop them off at their doorstep as well as suggestions of those that may need this help. Maureen Warren has agreed to let us use the groceries in the food pantry here at the church.

Next Meeting will be April 7, 2020 at 5:00PM.

Missionary Group: No March Meeting

-Outreach Project: Mountain View Elementary School snack program. The program has been hugely successful with much congregation participation. Thank you. With schools cancelling for the unknown future, the snacks will be distributed to children via the Weinburg food distribution.

-Summer Lunch Box Program: Will begin Peanut Butter collection in May

-Soup Day: Made 30 quarts of Beef Vegetable soup and 6 quarts of Potato/Bacon Soup. We used the dehydrated vegetables in the church cupboard and the roast beef left from the Roast Beef Dinner. The soup will go to fill the Soup Ministry needs.

-Shower of Blessings: We will hold a Shower for the Women's Resource Center and CareNet through the month of April. We will have a light reception May 3, 2020 so that the congregation can see what has been collected. We will advertise in the March Spire.

-Daily Bread: This devotional is available on the table by the double glass doors.

Trustee: March 9, 2020

Old Business:

The old fire security system: Harry said that the system should work even if the power goes out, but we are not confident. Harry would like to shop around for another system before committing to Rapid Response Monitoring. Bill will do more research as to other available system providers. Harry would like to track down Bob Taylor who put the commercial system in at Mountain View Elementary school.

Railing in gathering room still needs to be secured. Trustees will add a 3" x 1 1/4" x 5" Plate to each post to strengthen it.

New Business:

Harry installed a new switch for the chandelier and the outside lights of the lecture hall. The ballast on the kitchen light still needs to be replaced.

Spring clean-up has been scheduled for April 18th with a rain date of April 25th.

Door to the gathering room from the old driveway was stuck for the girl scouts.

Trustees have planned a work night for Wednesday night 3/18 to clear some needed repairs from our list.

Railing in gathering room still needs to be secured. Trustees will add a 3" x 1 1/4" x 5" Plate to each post to strengthen it.

Willing Worker - Big Group

(Special Log Cabin Meeting - March 7)

Kay turned the meeting over to Ivie as she had been in contact with Cindy Warren, head of spaces, in the fair office. Since the Old Log Cabin is being torn down and rebuilt in another place, we must also move to a new space. Ivie reported that there are several available choices of spaces—a 12x12 with an outside door for \$350 or an inside space for \$250 with no individual door and only accessible from an inside hallway. Each space has an additional charge of \$30 for electricity. There are conflicting reports whether we may leave our possessions behind after the fair or if we need to move them to a new location. Also investigated was the purchase of a small building that we could use each fair week and leave our stuff in; however, once installed on the fair grounds, it would belong to the fair and we would still have to pay rent.

A motion was made that we rent 2 adjoining outside spaces in the new building. This will cost \$700 plus \$60 electricity. Since we were “penciled in” Ivie immediately called and had us “inked in.” The new space should be near where the old log cabin stood.

There were lots of areas of discussion: probably can't store anything in there for the winter because they are going to rent the areas out for boat and camper storage or use it for events, floors will be cement, no ceiling fans may be put up, there will be lights, electrical outlets will be per code. It was asked if we could rent the old log cabin after it is moved since it will belong to the Historical Society. Actually, the fair owns the building but will not be charging the Historical Society rent as it will be used as a museum.

Because the roof will soon be removed, we need to get our things out. The meeting adjourned to the fair grounds to look at the building and see what will be kept and what will be trashed. Because of the size of the fudge case, it was decided to junk it (not sure how we will do that—perhaps put on roadside with a free sign or pay \$50 for spring township cleanup to haul it away).

Those present decided to meet on Tuesday, March 8 at 10AM at the fair grounds to move our stuff out. Kandy is to find Rick Masters for the key to his space for storage of our stuff. Ivie took the embroidered sign home for safe keeping for the Historical Society. Maureen wants to take some of the shelves down since she put them up.

Kandy is writing a letter to the fair with a number of questions. We wondered if one door could be left down for crowd control. Could that door be painted to look fancy and not just like an empty building?

FYI The fair office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 9-3.

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



Spire Sponsor

In Memory of
Ken and Eleanor Jesse

Lucrecia and Nelson Jesse

Weinberg Food Bank is coming to Harford First Congregational Church

The 4th Friday of each month
Next day April 24, 2020
3:30-5:30

There is no income requirement
Preregistration is required:
See attached application or
complete the form online firstchurchharford.com
or call Teresa @ 570-756-2752



Day of Distribution please bring with you a photo ID and a current household bill with your current Susquehanna County address





Weinburg Food Bank

February 28, 2020



Weinberg Food Bank Distribution

March 27, 2020



**THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING
FOR THEIR DONATIONS TO THIS
MONTH'S FOOD BANK!**

**-Susquehanna Co. Dairy Promotion
Team and The Bewley Family for
donations of milk**

**-Interfaith for
donation of hams**



Missionary Note

You can just see the gleam of water in the bottom. Darling our (Nicaraguan missionary) said that it is filling nicely. The water is good - surprisingly good, they said, though I think they will still use the filters. It will provide drinking water for all the children's CHE and women's meetings at the church, as well as be available to the community. Darling's husband, Chico, and Edyn plan to create a model garden at the church, to help teach people how to grow plants in such a harsh climate. This would have been impossible without the well. A donation from a Baptist ministry also contributed to the well. Edyn and Juanita are super happy about the well, and send blessings to you and your church.

*This well was supported by donations from our missionary bake sale and the missionary yard sales.



HAPPY EASTER

Spire Sponsor

Rich and Shirley

Masters

April Shower of Blessings “6”

When: The month of April

Where: Harford First Congregational UCC

Benefit: The Women’s Resource Center & CareNet

A “Thank you” reception will be held after church,

May 3, 2020 to display all collected items and

celebrate a gift of love.

We will be collecting:

New Linen

Cleaning Supplies

Gift Certificates

Personal Hygiene Items

Baby Items

* See next pages for a
Complete List

WRC WISH LIST

The Women's Resource Center in Susquehanna County is in need of the following donations that will be used to assist survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence in our community. Please call with any questions:

570-278-1800

Gift Cards

Pump & Pantry, \$10 Gas Cards

Price Chopper, Ray's or Rob's \$10 or \$25 Gift Cards

Wal-Mart \$10 or \$25 Gift Cards

New Donations of:

Linens, including sheets, towels and washcloths

Cleaning supplies, such as mops, brooms and plastic pails

Additional Items:

Toilet paper, paper towels and tissues

Shampoo, conditioner, lotion and body wash

Deodorant, tooth brushes and tooth paste

Razors, feminine supplies, nail care items and sewing kits

Hair brushes, combs and hair ties

Laundry detergent (64 oz. or smaller), fabric softener and dryer sheets

Dish soap, household cleansers, sponges and scrubbing pads

Adult blankets, adult and children socks

Baby/children's items (Diapers, wipes, soaps and toothpaste)

Hard cover journals, pens

Reusable grocery bags

Donation Box is in the Gathering Room

Baby Shower Ideas Care Net Pregnancy Center of NEPA

Car Seats – INFANT – neutral colors

Diapers – (In the SMALL packs of 20 – 30 diapers)
Size N, 1, 4, 5, 6 and pull ups (we have 2 and 3)

Desitin / A&D ointment

Baby Shampoo, Baby Wash, Baby Lotion

Baby hooded towels and wash cloths

Boppy pillow

Nursing covers

Breast Pump

Mobiles

Baby stroller

Wipes – sensitive skin

**Pack and Play and pack-n-play sheets

Changing tables (usually get Graco Freeport to match crib – Espresso or cherry - Walmart)

Clothing up to size 24 months

Onesies through 12 months (colored – not white)

Photo albums

Potty chair

Socks / Baby shoes / boots

**Snuggles (little blankets about 12" square with or w/o animals)

**Teethers & Rattles

Photo albums or baby memory books

Cute things for the mom's are always fun, too. – Body spray, lotions, soaps, gift cards, tea,....

Baby Safe and Gentle Laundry Detergent

High Chair seats that strap onto a regular chair

Anything that you see in a Baby Department we can use at Care Net.

While shopping, try to put yourself in the place of a 15-25 year old mom who loves nice things, but doesn't have money for anything she needs for her baby. If you love it, she will, too. If you used it with your kids, she will use it, too.

We also like to put together a "new mom" gift bag with newborn items and a few "pamper mom" items. So anything towards this end is great – even a good family oriented book (We do give them a "Mother's Comfort" Devotional guide)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!! HAVE FUN SHOPPING. USE YOUR IMAGINATION.

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of babies and their families.

Baby Monitors

Burb pads & bibs

Crib Sheets & Crib mattress pads

CD's with baby music (Twinkle Twinkle little star, baby Einstein...etc, both singing and instrumental)

Clothing – 0-12 months / snow suits / jackets

Gerber gentle formula 0-12 months (NOT NEWBORN)

First Aid kit (baby)

\$20 gift cards to Walmart or Target or Price Chopper

Baby bath tubs with sling liner for infants

Medical kits or baby hygiene kit

Diaper Genies & liner bags

Baby Carriers (soft straps)



With the addition of our Fatherhood program, we now have Dad's shopping, too. So think of toys or clothing a Dad would like for the little ones (camo, sports oriented, etc)

Home Bound

The Carey Family

Barbara Pease

All of Us

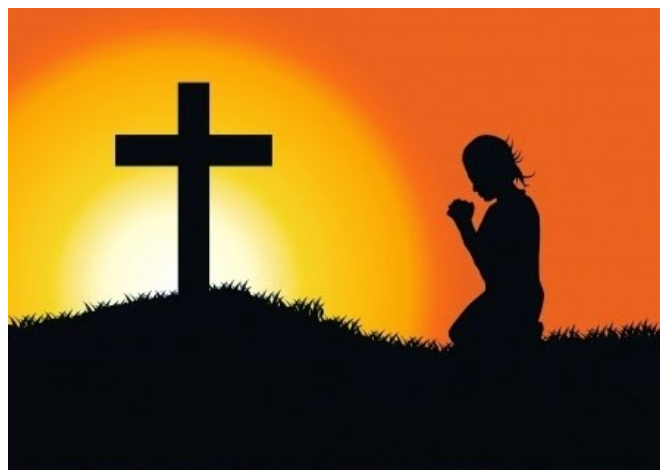
Dorothy Greene



Prayer Concerns

Judy Mitchell's grandson (Mason)
Rock Estabrook and Family
Nicholas (Great Grandson of the Weidemans)
Patrick Simons
Scott Klenk
Heather Warren
Christian Kuhar
Mary Jane Genneken
Sandy Paolucci
Brandi & Dave
Larry Herbert
Shawni Vietri
Joshua (Vietri's foster son)
Karen Jones' Family Members
JoAnn Titus
Gary and Wendy Phillips
Ellie Miller
Sandi Zapanovich
Pastor Will's new Family

Family of Harriet Cronk
Aunt Dolly (Bob DeLuca's sister)
Evan Clarkson
Lynn Franklin and Family
Sabrina and Jim Hayes(Nancy Burris' daughter)
Greg Symuleski
Joe Batzel and family
our nation under God
our government
Barbara Weideman
Corinne Chichester and job search
Sharon Frantz
Weinberg Food Bank
Emily and Donovan
Albert Oullette
Joe Rybnick
Karin and Art Doolittle
Barb Pompey



Directory update:



Helen Foster
Skilled Nursing Facility
Barnes-Kasson County Hospital
2772 Turnpike Street
Susquehanna, Pa 18847
(Niece Cindy mentioned that Aunt Helen would
Appreciate cards and hearing how everyone is doing.)

Dale and Kathy Ferger
1703 Lower , PA 18834
dfferger@nep.net 607-857-2694 607-857-2698

Thomas and Elissa (Muller) Devenny
1802 Stallon Street
Williamstown, NJ 08094

June Goodrich
Creekside Apts
New Milford,PA 18834

Glenn and Margaret Smith
48 Decker Court
Harford, PA 18823

April Birthdays



| | | | |
|----------|---------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| April 03 | Jenny (Simons) Frantz | April 12 | Travis Bridgeman |
| April 04 | Alex Empet | | Elissa Muller |
| April 07 | Will Hagenbuch | April 15 | Lola Zimmerman |
| | Lynnette Millard | April 17 | Grace Ann Graf |
| | Dot Simons | April 19 | Brooke Zupanovich |
| April 08 | Shirley Masters | April 21 | Ron Phillips |
| April 10 | Dale Empet | April 22 | Jackie Schulte |
| | Carol Oakley | April 23 | Katie Brown |
| April 11 | Edward James Zick (Teddy) | April 25 | Irv Needham |
| | | April 30 | Lauren Abigail Mitchell |
| | | | Wyatt Zick |

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.

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.

POLL WORKERS NEEDED!

**SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY IS ACTIVELY SEEKING
POLL WORKERS FOR THE PRIMARY AND GENERAL
ELECTIONS!**

**PLEASE CONTACT 570-278-6697 OR VISIT
www.VotesPA.com/GetInvolved for more info!**

**SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ARE
PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE:
NEW VOTING MACHINES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT
ALL COUNTY LIBRARIES!**

**YOU CAN SEE AND LEARN HOW THE MACHINES WORK BEFORE
THE ELECTION!**

**ALSO AVAILABLE – VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS, MAIL-IN AND
ABSENTEE BALLOTS!**

We will have a TEAM ready to EDUCATE you at Ag Day, also!

**If you have a group and would like a demonstration of the machines,
please call 570-278-6600 and we will schedule your meeting or event!**



Willing Workers willingly working.....

Counting and labeling knives to be
sold during the Harford Fair 2020

“They’ll know we are Christians by our love”

as the familiar hymn says. It doesn’t say they will know us because we gather in person, because we worship in a sanctuary, because we have a coffee hour and fellowship time. People will know we are Christians by the love we share with and show to one another.

As we are learning in these days of the pandemic, love is not always about physical presence. It can be about a phone call, a note, an e-mail. It can be shared through Zoom, Facebook or another electronic media platform. Mission can be offered through carry out meals, reading to children on-line, sending financial resources to those who are able to work on the front lines in person. Reach out if you are uncertain how to help, or if you, yourself, or your congregation needs help.

In these days the most loving thing we may be able to do is self-isolate and practice social distancing. For an extrovert who loves to hug people, this is especially hard. I want to be with people, to be hugging people, to be in our churches worshipping with our folks. I know many of you want that too. At this moment, that is unwise and a little reckless. Better to preserve and protect the health of our communities in the best ways possible.

As a result of the pandemic, my Installation as the Fourth Conference Minister of the Penn Northeast Conference of the United Church of Christ has been postponed. The new date is June 28, 2020 at 3 pm. The location will still be the United Church of Christ -Greenawald. As you can imagine, I am disappointed in the delay of this celebration, but you are each and all more important to me than celebrating on a particular date. The celebration will happen. We will gather for a blow-out of a worship service and party.

I can imagine the scenes when our congregations are able to gather in sanctuaries in person once again. We will certainly not take our physical presence and ability to gather for granted. We will have learned some ways to reach out to those who cannot, or who choose not, to enter the church building. We will have strengthened the skills of those congregational volunteers who currently are making check-in phone calls to our elders and homebound. We will know our strengths, our gifts, and our growing edges better than we know them now.

We are not alone in these days. We are together. God is with us. Faith abounds. Grace pours over us. We are Christians and we continue to share and demonstrate our love for one another.

Blessings, Bonnie Bates

Worship Assistants– April



Greeters

April 5th: Alice Archer
April 12th: Priscilla Allen
April 19th: Dorothy Hagenbuch
April 26th: Karen Jones

Readers

April 05, 2020 Alice Archer
April 12, 2020 Sharon Kinney
April 19, 2020 Rich Masters
April 26, 2020 Karen Jones

Ushers

April 5th: Mikaela Stout and Bailey Millard
April 12th: Bill Chichester and George Lotter
April 19th: Harry and Julia Gardener
April 26th: Alyssa Clarkson and Cody Nolan

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. 12:30-2:00 pm

Judy Mitchell –Sec

Hours: Tuesday 1:00-5:00

Friday 1:00-5:00