

A photograph of a white church with a tall steeple, yellow daffodils in the foreground, and a small white rabbit. The church is a two-story white building with a prominent steeple topped with a cross. The foreground is filled with numerous yellow daffodils. A small white rabbit is visible in the lower-left corner, partially obscured by the flowers. The sky is a clear, bright blue. A paved path leads away from the church towards the right, with a black street lamp visible. The entire image is framed by a thick yellow border.

Our Spire

Volume 43

Number 3

April 2023

**Reaching Up
to God,
Reaching out
to People**



What brings you the most joy in your life?

Now that's a good one to answer! On the surface, this is not a challenging question. Many joys in your life may immediately come to mind. Perhaps it was a significant graduation, or your wedding day. Maybe it was a big birthday.

Think more on this question about what brings you joy. I imagine you've placed Christ's Resurrection on your list.

Yes. The resurrection! Now *that* IS joy!

Psalm 30 extols David's joy in the LORD because the LORD has helped him escape a dangerous situation—his own death! David's first response? Yes, it is to sing a psalm of joy to the LORD.

Think about how Jesus' disciples felt when they learn their teacher/leader/friend has risen from the grave on Easter morning just like He said he would. After a horrifying week which started with rejoicing and ended in an awful death, the first thing the followers of Jesus do on what we call the first Easter morning is express what? That's right! Joy! They have joy that the Master is alive and well.

In Matthew's Gospel chapter 28, verse 8, we discover that Mary Magdalene and Mary, Jesus' mother, feel great joy when they discover the empty tomb and that Christ had risen. Easter joy is in their hearts. Jesus is alive! This proves the truth of everything that Jesus told them while He was with them.

The first Easter story continues. On that first Easter evening, Jesus shows the nail holes in his hands and feet to His disciples and their joy overwhelms them.

This joy is experienced by the disciples and followers of Jesus on the first Easter. The men and women who knew Jesus and those who traveled with him experienced the great delivery of the LORD's promises on the Resurrection morning.

The prophets had told the people for centuries that a day would come when the Messiah of the world would sacrifice Himself for them. That promise was not fully understood or fully known then. They discovered on that first Easter morning what everything Jesus told them meant. The years of Jesus' teaching and the events of Passion week started to make some sense. They rejoiced and were glad on that first Easter. Jesus had transformed their heaviness of sackcloth and mourning into an incredible, almost indescribable joy.

Let this joy be your joy this Easter. Resound with the greatest news.

The LORD lives!

LET THERE BE LIGHT THIS EASTER

What do you do when you walk into a dark room? You reach for the light switch, right? For many of us, it's probably hard to imagine living without that little thing called "the lightbulb."

Can you imagine experiencing that invention for the first time? What a life-changing experience! In 1893, Chicago hosted the World's Fair. And one of the most memorable events of that World's Fair, was on May first when nearly 100,000 incandescent lights instantly flooded the nighttime sky. For many, this was their first experience with this novelty called the lightbulb. That little thing – the lightbulb – has changed the world in which we live.

One little baby, born 2000 years ago in overcrowded Bethlehem, changed the world in which we live. Some may wonder how one child, born so many years ago, can still make such an impact us today. To answer, let's go to the beginning.

In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light." and time began. The infinite darkness was instantly shattered by light. God spoke and the universe and everything in it came into existence including the first two people who God had carefully, personally crafted with His own hands. These two people were to be the crown of his creation. They were meant to live forever in the perfect world that he had created for them. They were to reflect the glory of their Creator as they daily lived to honor and serve him.

But that perfect world and that perfect relationship with God was soon shattered by the darkness of sin. Adam and Eve selfishly thought that they knew better than God. They disobeyed God, and just as suddenly as light had shattered darkness, now the darkness of sin shattered God's perfect creation. A relationship without fear, a world without pain, a life without death – was instantly gone!

Fast forward. It is no wonder that the angels could not contain themselves on the night of Jesus' birth. They shouted, "Glory to God in the highest heaven!" (Luke 2:14) because there, in that manger, in that one newborn, God's glory was being revealed. This baby is none other than the one who created light at the beginning of time. This baby is none other than God Himself.

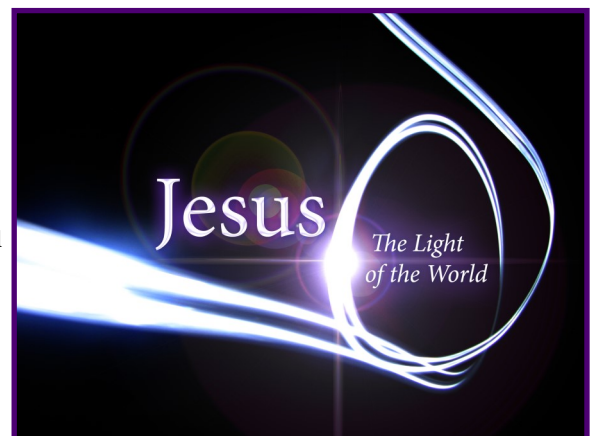
Some 30 years after Jesus was born, Jesus made it clear what his purpose was for coming into this world when he said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10). From the moment of his conception till the day of his death, Jesus was searching and saving those lost in the darkness. Each day, Jesus went to battle the darkness for us. Jesus perfectly lived, to the glory of his heavenly Father, for us who have so failed to do so in our words, thoughts and actions. Jesus' love for the lost drove him to the cross, where he took the punishment of hell, eternal separation from God, for the sins of all the world. And then, on Easter morning, Jesus rose from the dead to declare that a drastic change had occurred.

For those who trust in him, Jesus gives His perfect life for the payment of sins which He made at the cross. Jesus taking the punishment meant for us, is God's way of plucking people out of the darkness of this world to live with Him in the glory of heaven.

This Easter, roll away the stone that is keeping you from the light.

Your Redeemer lives!

Your Redeemer also lights your way through darkness.



A Journey Through Lent



When we journey with Christ, we discover we change, engage and live out not only who Christ is, but who we are.

For the Lenten series this year called *A Journey Through Lent*, I brought us through the lectionary and wondered with you what it looks like when we take scripture beyond the stories in the text that we engage each week. For example, on the first Sunday in Lent, we picked up the passage where Jesus is tempted for 40 days and 40 nights by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). While we hear the conversation between the two in our reading, reason has it that the two had more than one conversation in their time together. What did they talk about? We hear how Jesus refutes Satan's temptations, but did they agree on anything? Were more temptations offered, or did the verses we read include them all?

We can't know the answers to these questions on this side of life, of course, but we can begin to understand what we need to understand, which is this: even Jesus had to deal with Satan not once but daily. We have to deal with (and shut down!) Satan in the same way. With this realization on our journey not just through Lent but through life, we can feel even more empowered to level the enemy just as Jesus did—and that's through the use of scripture.

On the second Sunday of Lent, we met a pharisee who did know scripture, and that was Nicodemus (John 3:1-17). What he didn't know, drew him by night to Jesus. Nicodemus doesn't realize Jesus is Lord in this encounter (from what we read), but something changes within himself on his journey since he met Christ. We don't hear of Nicodemus again until chapter 7, but here, in front of the Sanhedrin, he speaks up for Jesus and is shut down. Finally, we read of Nicodemus with Joseph of Arimathea (John 19). The two take Jesus' body down from the cross and prepare it with expensive oils Nicodemus bought. What changed on Nicodemus's journey from that first nighttime meeting to lovingly taking Jesus' body off the cross speaks volumes about how, over time, Jesus reaches us, also. Nicodemus's journey is our journey, too.

On the third Sunday of Lent, we hear from one almost completely opposite Nicodemus, the woman at the well (John 4:5-42). Nameless in the text, she doesn't have a theological education, and meets Jesus midday. Unlike Nicodemus, she realizes in her one and only meeting with Jesus that he is indeed the Lord. Whereas Nicodemus never proclaims Jesus as Christ in the Bible, she does. She brings the whole town to an understanding of who Jesus is. Her journey, like ours, becomes one about sharing (and living) the gospel message once we know who Jesus is.

On the fourth Sunday in Lent, another nameless character is introduced, the man born blind (John 9:1-41). His journey is like ours in that he doesn't ask Jesus for healing. Sometimes we don't either. We take life as it is—sometimes good, sometimes challenging. But Jesus changes him, just as Jesus changes us, so that we, like the man born blind, can see. Specifically, we can see how (and what) Jesus wants us to see.

On the fifth Sunday in Lent, we have the story of the raising of Lazarus. If we are to journey best through Lent and beyond, then we looked at Jesus' love not in theory, but in action. Jesus loved Lazarus just as he loved his sisters Martha and Mary. This report comes before this sermon, but from the pulpit I'll talk about how love can be messy, or at least not contained in a next box. When we love, for example, we do exactly what Jesus did. We get angry. We also weep.

If Easter is to have any bearing, we need to be conscious of our journey through Lent. In understanding more of who Christ is with those he meets, we see that Jesus meets us, too. Just as he changed Nicodemus in time, he changes us, too.

A REMINDER

This is a reminder that the memorial service for Dottie Hagenbuch will be held in the sanctuary on Holy Saturday, April 8th. Visitation with the family begins at 10:30. The service will begin at 11:30. All are invited to the Lecture Hall where lunch will be served immediately following the service.



Beginning Hand Bell Choir

Our beginner hand bell choir started February 26, 2023 and will be held right after church every 2nd and 4th Sundays.

No prior experience is necessary and the ability to read music helps but is also not necessary.

Please text or call Earl Cottrell for question or to let him know that you are interested at 701-405-3417.



Spire Sponsors

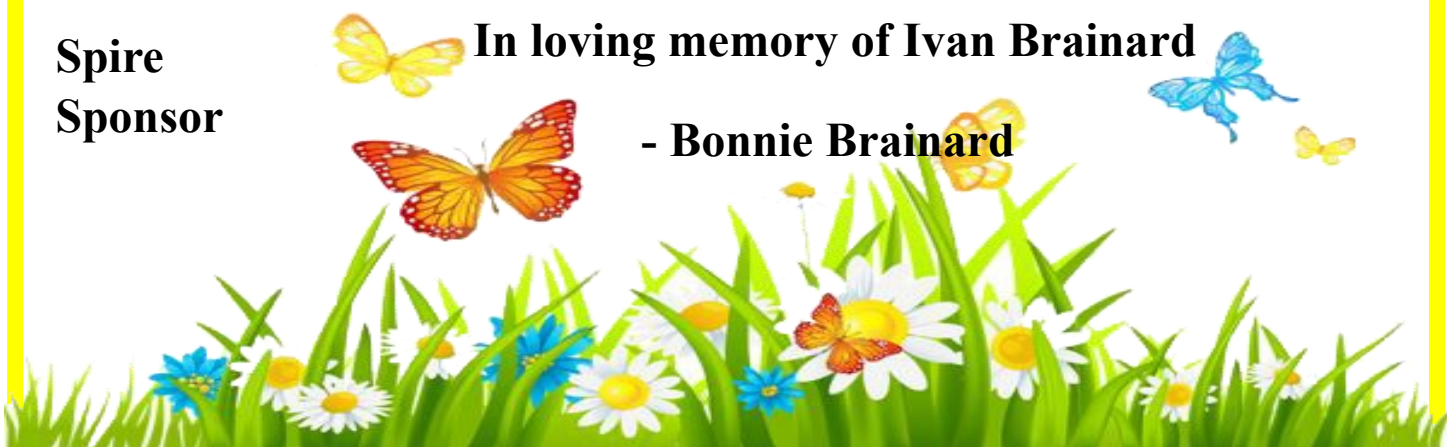
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Harford First Congregational Church—UCC PO Box 217 Harford, PA 18823

**Spire
Sponsor**

In loving memory of Ivan Brainard

- Bonnie Brainard



Other Council Minutes

| February 2022 | February 2023 | YTD |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Income: \$12,997.45 | Income: \$ 9,303.20 | Income: \$23,546.61 |
| Expense: \$ 9,427.27 | Expense: \$10,697.24 | Expense: \$25,839.77 |
| Total: +\$3,570.18 | Total: -\$1,394.04 | Total: -\$2,293.16 |

Next Meeting: April 27 at 6:00

Finance Committee - 3-22-23

Attending: Maureen Warren, Julia Gardner, Holli Chichester, Nancy Burris, Connie Breese

Discussion of the church's current financial situation:

1. Current giving is not equal to the current spending. (Giving in January and February are usually somewhat lower than needed).
2. Stock donation from a congregation member will be held as stock for a bit. The value will be determined and watched for increases or decreases.
3. Annuity #1 hits the year mark on April 11, 2023. We have 15 days from that point to decide if we wish to change how the money is allocated within the annuity. We received no interest this year due to the gyrations of the market. Nancy recommends changing to a fixed interest return. That program is currently at an annual 5.15%. We recommend checking the percent return on April 11. If it is around the current rate, move the money within the annuity to that program.
4. Annuity #2 hits the year mark on July 27 and Annuity #3 hits the year mark on August 24. We recommend following the same procedures with these two annuities.
5. We reviewed the financial situation that occurred in 2021 where giving did not cover expenses and approximately \$10,000 had to be taken from other programs and funds. We recommend taking \$23,404.45 from the money remaining from 2022 and place it in the highest yielding savings account for emergencies (this is approximately two years of emergency coverage).
6. We additionally recommend taking the remaining \$50,000 and place it in a fixed rate annuity. The money would be protected from losses in the market and grow modestly.
7. This would give us four annuities. Two of these annuities have the ability to release 10% of the total to us in the event of a catastrophe. Annuity #2's principle can not be used, only the interest.

Christian Education—3-21-23

Ellen and Holli Chichester met to set topics for the remaining weeks of Sunday School. CE didn't want to buy a new set of curriculum for only four weeks.

March 26: Jesus feeds the 5000

Meet for opening singing
Video about Jesus feeding the 5000
dismiss for lesson reinforcing, game, craft

April 2: Palm Sunday

Meet for opening singing
Video of Jesus entering Jerusalem
Karen has craft, we will meet in downstairs for craft.
(Karen will give craft to little kids teachers)
Reinforce lesson, game in separate rooms

April 9: Easter Sunday

Meet for opening songs and video for resurrection story
Easter Egg hunt outside if possible

April 16: Jesus appears to disciples (Doubting Thomas)

Meet for opening songs and video "Jesus Appears to Thomas"
Craft - Jesus suddenly appears to disciples (ordered)

April 23: Jesus Ascends and Pentecost:

Meet for opening songs and video : Jesus ascends and pentecost
Craft: Ascension of Jesus (ordered)

April 30: Sharing the "Good News of Jesus"

Meet for opening songs and video : Sharing the Good News of Jesus
Craft: Gospell cross (ordered)
Bracelet - Jesus Loves Me (ordered)

May 7: Last Day and party

Meet for opening songs and video "God's Story"
Games, Party

**** Kids finishing 3rd grade will receive their Bibles in Church this day (Tavin, Syllas, Hunter, Landon). Also any older students that have not already received a Bible.

Meeting on June 19 at 6:30 at the church to map out the next year so that everything is ready. All teachers are encouraged to attend.

We are thinking of doing the Old Testament stories until December. Then we will switch to the New Testament starting with the birth of Jesus and the pageant.

We hope to get new music videos of 10 traditional Christian songs that have motions and lyrics the kids can take with them into adulthood. Kandy has been asked to help select songs.

We also plan to have videos that go with every lesson, crafts and supplies ordered before next September.

We hope that this pre-planning reduces the stress and time necessary for teaching Sunday School.

Deacon Minutes - 3-19-2023

Attending: Wendy Phillips, Will Hagenbuch, Sharon Frantz, Dee Archer, Nancy Burris, Holli Chichester, Kay Gow, Lisa Hahn (absent Linda Lindsey, Leanne Colwell)

Minutes from February were read and approved after the Welcome Statement was amended. See below. The Welcome Statement will be printed in large print (4 copies), laminated and placed on the altar.

Welcome Statement

This church welcomes everyone. We welcome the faithful, the fallen, those who reach out and those who are so broken that they cannot reach out at all.

This church welcomes those who are joining us online, our neighbors, our extended community and those worshipping with us for the first time.

We welcome children in our worship, for they are our present and our future. We welcome you, whoever you are and wherever you are on your faith journey.

Let's welcome the Spirit of our Living God already here among us. To do so, let us pray.

50-year Recognition: 50-year-pins. Lisa contacted Nye Jewelers. They are getting a price for her. The invitations were mailed out. It appears that there was a 50-year recognition between 2008 and today. Four members received their pins. Unfortunately, these members plus others, received the invitation to the May 7th recognition.

Lenten Schedule: The Mass Shooting class offer at First Church April 22 from 9-3:00 will be announced at the Lenten Services so that the other Route 11 churches will be invited to join us. The flyers will be copied and distributed to each pastor.

New Member Class: We currently have 5 persons interested in joining. (Earl Cottrell, Chris Manley, Joe Metzler, Marge Tater, Grace Allen). See the schedule to follow:

New Membership Class: Using "What Matters to You, Matters to Us". Lead by Will Hagenbuch

**Lunch will be provided. (Subway, Chips, Water)- (Holli will order, Bill will pick up)*

March 26, 2023 - Class 1

Ask each person who they wish to have as a mentor

Deacon – Kay Gow (Member Care, Bible Study, Worship)

Welcome by Council President – Dave Schulte

History of Harford Church (Handout), History of UCC (Handout)

Statement of Faith - page 76

6 Vital Themes – page 9

Why this church? Chapters 3, 7

April 2, 2023 - Class 2

Deacon – Dee Archer

Church Organization (Handout)

Review Committees (Who they are and what they do)-Handout

Christian Education Rep (Sunday School, Confirmation, VBS)- Holli Chichester

Where do you see yourself participating in this church? (Time and talent sheet)

How do you see yourself growing in your faith in this church?

Deacons Continued

April 16, 2023 - Class 3

Deacon – Lisa Hahn

Michelle Estabrook (Stewardship)

Church Secretary – Welcome – Judy

Sacraments and Rituals – Chapter 4

Services (in-house and online)

Weddings, Baptism, Funerals, Communion

Easter, Lent, Christmas

April 23, 2023 - Class 4

Deacon – Nancy Burris

Missionary – TBD

Embracing the Differences, Coming Together in Love – Chapter 1, 5

Outreach – Handout

Fellowship (Men's Breakfast, Women's Lunch, Fellowship Group,

Willing Worker, Choir, Handbells, Ugly Quilts))

April 30, 2023 - Class 5

Deacon – Wendy Phillips

Personal Faith Journey – Chapter 2, 6

Mentors present

May 5, 2023 Join church, Mentors present.

Statement of faith read by all

All deacons present.

50-year Members recognized and receive pins (Dee and Lisa)

New Members recognized. Receive key and certificate. (Kay and Wendy)

Third Graders and up receive Bible. (Holli and Nancy)

Group picture

Celebration - lecture hall. Kay and Holli set up prior to Sunday School that morning. Kandy to make cake.

The **Hand Bell Choir** will practice the 2nd and 4th Sundays after church. The Deacons will move their meeting to the 3rd Sunday of the month so as not to conflict. Hand Bells to play on Easter.

The AED is in and ready for classes. Sandy Yushinsky has set up a **CPR/AED class** for the congregation on May 6, 2023 from 9-12. The cost is \$10.

The New Milford Rifle and Pistol Club is offering an accredited class for the USCCA **Countering the Mass Shoot Threat**. The instructors are willing to come to our church for the class on April 22, 2023 9:00-2:00. The cost is \$15/person with a cap at \$250. The accompanying text is \$25 and is optional.

Palm Sunday: The children will hand out palms just before the last song. Robbie will be asked to play something while this is happening.

Easter: Sunrise Service: 7:00 outside. Kay and Holli will be present to usher and set up.

10:00 service: Rob Hagenbuch will read the scripture. Kandy will do the welcome and the communion liturgy. Lisa, Kay, Dee and Wendy will serve traditional communion. Wendy will serve the choir and pulpit. Dee, Lisa and Kay will serve the congregation traditional communion. Just prior to the beginning of the liturgy, the congregation will be asked if anyone would rather receive pre-packaged communion element. Holli will pass those out.

No April Meeting: Next Meeting - May 21, 2023

Missionary Minutes - 3-21-23

Attending: Karen Jones, Kay Gow, Ellen Holdredge, Peg Empet, Priscilla Allen, Sherry Decker, Holli Chichester, Maureen Warren

Opened with Prayer: Priscilla

Minutes: Read and Approved

Council Minutes: Sherry Decker

Treasurers Report: Maureen Warren

Beginning Balance: \$4,474.21

- \$300.00 Holli for Gift Cards

+ \$ 11.00 Dues

+ \$ 6.00 Least Coin Collection

Ending Balance: \$4,191.21

Earthquake in Turkey Mission: Missionary: \$500

Congregation (to date): \$877

Total (to date): \$1377.00

We will send \$1000 now and give the congregation a few more weeks, then send the remaining funds.

Correspondence: Out: 5 cards

In: Thank you from My Brother's Keeper for donation.

Thank you from Trehab for donation.

Council Rep: March – Karen Jones, April – Peg Empet, May – Wendy Phillips

Projects:

Hurricane and Tornado Disaster Relief: Due to the increase of natural disasters this year, the Church World Service (CWS) has significantly depleted their Disaster Relief Kits. We have voted to work to supply Hygiene Kits to the CWS. We will begin this collection at the end of March and run the collection through April 18. On April 18, 2023 we will assemble the Hygiene Kits for distribution to the CWS warehouse April 24. Ellen will begin the Hygiene Kit Collection on March 26 during a Minute for Mission time. She will bring in a completed kit so all can see the required items.

CWS has also sent out a request for "Women's Packs". The need is great during an emergency for monthly women's supplies. The United Church of Christ offered a grant to match funds for disaster kits of any church applying. Missionary applied for these funds and has received \$250. We will use those funds to prepare "Women's Packs" to accompany the Hygiene Kits.

Yard Sale: The Yard Sale is set for August 25-26, 2023. Tammy has been willing to flex the Weinberg dates to accommodate this change. Thank you to her!!!

Other Missions: Missionary Group decided to obtain a piece of furniture that was needed by a very worthy family.

Future Events: Election Day Bake Sale Tuesday, May 16, 2023.

Next Meeting: April 18, 2023 at 1:00.

Pastor's Report to Council

One of the joys I regularly share during our time of joy in worship is so important! I say, "You're here!"

In these days where Covid rearranged how we gather (or even IF we gather anywhere!), I find it such a joy to name what we in worship together experience—and that's the JOY of being together. I continue to be humbled, impressed, and grateful for those who come out each Sunday and participate in worship firsthand. I know not everyone can be present in worship for understandable reasons, so those who faithfully participate online—cheers to you, too.

The connections we make when together are vital to the life and the joy we experience as a congregation. As Lent 2023 brings us into the season of Easter, I invite those who have somehow been bumped away from worship to realize the time to join the fellowship again is now.

I find it so important to share again that worship is about celebrating the living, breathing, passionate Christ that is inside all of us by way of the ever-present Holy Spirit. We talk differently and respond differently to each other when in church. Love is here. Care is here. Joy is here. And this? This is AMAZING!

I write elsewhere here in *Our Spire* about the Lenten sermon series this year, but didn't mention how affirming and powerful it is to hear us as a congregation sing through Lent. I hear some say that they cannot sing. I'll disagree. To be surrounded by voices singing what turns into powerful response, testimony and prayers is truly wonderful. For example, during the confession on the March 19th service, I invited us to sing a verse of *Amazing Grace* a cappella. I wasn't giving Robert Fisher's fingers at the keyboard a break as much as I was making us aware of how well, how deep, and how true those lyrics and that melody line is. These hymns carry us. They define us. They become who we are and how we are.

And to hear that singing from the voices all around makes you realize what I have said, that this is a Spirit moved and moving place of God.

One Sunday in my Sunday school class I had only young women with me (usually it's mostly guys or all guys). This was such a gift from God because of the lectionary scripture that day, the woman at the well. In prep for that sermon, I read a great deal of feminist and womanist theology from outstanding sources. To share with these young women what I had learned opened conversation about sexuality today. My students are teens. Yes, we talk about relationships—peer pressures, internalized pressures, and the peace that comes when we know we have Christ to turn to and find out not only who He is, but who we are when with Him.

My class meets in my office. It is sacred space because it is nearly private space. Much can be shared because we do not meet in a space where we can easily be overheard.

What an honor it was to be invited to be a part of the Boy Scouts Court of Honor on March 4th. I gave the invocation and a prayer to the two Eagle Scouts we celebrated, Gavin Bewley and Alex Empet. I have known both boys (now young men!) since they were in elementary school. It was an amazingly uplifting service. I remain grateful to you, the congregation, for being so present to both the Boy and the Girl Scouts through the years. Pray with me that our connection and our support to them remains bright and strong in the future.

It is a joy to be singing with the choir again during the *Feast of the Pascal Lamb* on Palm Sunday this year. Working with Robert and the choir is always a treasure.

I presided at the funeral of Terry Werkheiser on Saturday night, March 18. The text I felt called to share was the same text that was to be shared the following day, the man born blind (John 9:1-41). This was a powerful move because through the Holy Spirit I shared with mostly unchurched people this truth: we are all blind at times and many of us, like the man born blind, never ask Jesus for sight. This doesn't stop Jesus from approaching us over and over and offering us ways to see not only *who* He is but also *how* He is—a Savior who keeps saving us and those around us when we speak of Him. I didn't know anyone at this service, though I met Terry's son in person once. Lives changed that night thanks to what Terry did, which was to get to a sanctuary of God such as the one here in Harford.

Pastor's Report to Council Continued

I'm never going to give great detail in the pastoral visits I have, but will say such great conversations usually happen in them. The joy of being your pastor for this many years means many of us have such a longstanding relationship. Newcomers are always a joy, too. Together we hear from God. This brings light and joy even (or especially) when some situations are not so joyful.

Our Route 11 Ministerium Lenten Services end next Wednesday night, March 29th. I'll miss this year's fellowship among the people who have come out as well as casual and worship time with the fellow pastors. I will share it has been wonderful to sit with my kids in the pews with the exception of the night I preached, March 22nd, in Great Bend. Our turnouts this year have been spirited and substantial. What a gift it is to stand behind a different pulpit with a different congregation and feel the love of Christ around us.

Our new membership class will have started by the time you read this. I am looking forward to this class and am grateful that members of our church will be joining me and the class as we learn about the history of the United Church of Christ and also about our church. Prayers are welcome for this class and the sharing we'll enjoy together.

I am thankful David Schulte will host the Good Friday Service this year. I am ready early with the bulletins and the preparations for the Easter Sunrise and Easter 10 AM services. I will do both as I have in the past. I do ask for prayers for my family and me as Holy Saturday is the day of my mom's memorial service. I will officiate this service as well as give the eulogy.

God Bless you all as we journey with Christ together

Trustee Meeting Minutes

March 6th, 2023

Attending: Harry Gardner, Irv Needham, Randy Decker, James Batzel, Kandy Wellman and Rick Masters

Old Business:

Julie Gardner has not yet touched up the paint. Harry offered to take care of it.

Harry still needs to speak with the company that monitors the fire system.

New Business:

Do we want to ask the Fire Company to hose the anti-skid off the concrete parking lot this year. Brooming and blowing it off was too much of a project. Rick offered to bring a skid steer mounted sweeper attachment. We will wait until winter has passed.

Trustees is planning our annual spring clean-up for April 29th with a back-up date of May 13th.

Trustees is suggesting an indoor maintenance schedule/checklist for the Church and Lecture Hall to make sure that certain areas that need periodic attention that may be missed outside of obvious areas.

Kandy is suggesting that we hire someone to clean the high traffic area carpets and certain spot cleaning where there are stains this spring as it's been two years since it was last done. Motion made to adjourn by Kandy Wellman, seconded by Randy Decker.

Respectfully submitted, Rick Masters, Secretary

Stewardship Minutes

March 16, 2023

The Stewardship Committee met on March 16, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Lecture Hall. Present for the meeting: Kay Gow, Michelle Estabrook, Joe Metzler, Julia Gardner, Pastor Will Hagenbuch, Wendy Phillips and Shirley Masters.

Pastor Will opened with scripture and prayer.

The box has been placed in the gathering room for spring/summer clothes for Interfaith.

Julia gave the financial secretary report and her financial report. The numbers for February 2023 are:

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Income | \$9,303.20 |
| Expenses | \$10,697.24 |
| Total | \$-1,394.04 |

Kay gave us a handout with heart and door verses. We are to review them and pick one for the pledge sheet to be mailed for our annual campaign. Pastor Will brought up a question about which translation to use – King James or NLT. Joe asked about using several translations and showing the difference and how it could reach everyone. We decided on having a deadline of May 17 for choosing one.

Shirley talked about having the pledge sheets printed to look professional. We also talked about a new format possibly for the pledge sheets. Shirley also mentioned about talking about a charitable contribution at the end of the year.

Our next meeting will be April 19, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Pastor Will closed the meeting with prayer at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Estabrook

Other Council News

Willing Workers: Provide refreshments at the Lenten Service, a funeral dinner, provided refreshments at the Catholic Choral Concert, ordered knives for the fair **Stop the Bleed** class will be scheduled in September 2023.

Choir: Plan to sing at Dorothy Hagenbuch's funeral, sing at the Feast of the Pascal Lamb on Palm Sunday. Choir time changed to 7:00 Tuesday.

Clerk: 2 Deaths

Cradle Roll: 3 Births and 3 children receiving birthday books.

Hand Bell Choir: Plan to play the prelude on Easter Sunday

Please Update your Directory:

Walter Poxon
#116 The Summit Place Senior Campus
8505 Flying Cloud Drive
Eden Prairie
MN 55344



Jeff Kerr
31868 Blue Passing
Loop
Wesley Chapel
FL 33545

April Birthdays and Anniversaries



April 2 Roxanne Love
April 3 Jenny (Simons) Frantz
April 4 Alex Empet
April 7 Will Hagenbuch
Lynnette Millard
Dot Simons
April 8 Shirley Masters
April 10 Dale Empet
Carol Oakley
April 11 Teddy James Zick

April 12 Travis Bridgeman
Elissa (Muller) Deverny
April 15 Grace Ann Graf
April 17 Brooke Zupanovich
April 19 Ron Phillips
April 21 Jackie Schulte
April 22 Katie Bailey
April 23 Irv Needham
April 25 Lauren Abigail Mitchell



Spire Sponsor

In Memory of Richie Masters

-Anita Millard

HYGIENE KITS LIST

When people are forced to abruptly leave their homes because of emergencies, they may not have time to pack the things they use on a daily basis like toothbrushes or soap. But after a few days without these items, they definitely miss them. Your hygiene kits offer a refreshing daily boost for someone when supplies are hard to come by. Please remember to send \$2/kit to CWS to cover the costs of processing.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- One 1-gallon Ziploc bag
- One hand towel measuring 15"x28" to 16"x32" (No fingertip, bath, dish, or micro-fiber towels.)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package (Found at discount dealers like sallybeauty.com. Search for wide tooth pastel comb to see example)
 - Must be sturdy with at least 6" of teeth
 - No pocket combs or picks
 - Rattail and combs without handles are acceptable
- One fingernail or toenail clipper (Either one is acceptable. Remove from packaging.)
- One bath-size bar of soap in the original package
- One toothbrush in the original package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids

All items must fit inside the Ziploc bag. Remove the excess air from the bag and seal before boxing. Do not add any extra items or toothpaste. A tube of extended expiration date toothpaste will be added to each hygiene kit just prior to its journey.



VALUE: \$15

PROCESSING FEE: \$2 per kit

KP_Q_23202.02

USA Disaster Relief

Missionary Group

With the advent of hurricanes, tornados and other natural disasters within the USA this year. Missionary Group will be collecting Hygiene items for Disaster Relief Hygiene Kits.

The collection will begin
March 26, 2023
and end
April 18, 2023.

The completed kits will be transported to the Broome County Council of Churches in Binghamton NY to be sent to the Church World Services warehouse.

A container will be in the Gathering Room for items for these kits. You may make completed kits and donate the completed kits or donate specific items to be used in making these kits. Please consult the page to the left for the requested items.

We will also accept monetary donations for kits or shipping made out to Missionary.

For questions:

Please call or text Holli Chichester at 301-643-1775 or Email at hollischichester@gmail.com

Hymn Dedication

Dedicate the Offertory Hymn of any Sunday Service in Honor or in Memory of someone. There is a sign up sheet in the Hallway next to the Flower sign-up sheet or place a card in the collection plate with the hymn and the name of the individual to whom you wish to honor.





Spring Happenings at Harford First Congregational Church

- April 2 - Palm Sunday Harford 10:00**
- April 7 - Good Friday: Seven Last Words Service:
Harford First Congregational Church, 6:00**
- April 9 - Easter Sunday Sunrise 7:00am
Sunday School 9:00am (Easter Egg Hunt)
Worship 10:00am**
- April 22- Mass Shooter Seminar 9-2**
- April 29 Spring Clean-Up at Church (May 13 rain date)**
- May 7 Recognition of 50 year Members
New Members Joining
Bibles given to 3rd grade and up
Refreshments and Celebration 11:00
Last Day of Sunday School**
- May 6- AED/CPR Class 9-12**
- May 16- Election Day Bake Sale**
- June 10 Golf Tournament—Tall Pines 9:00am**
- June 12-15 Stellar VBS – 10:00-12:30
Multi-Church**
- August 14-19 Harford Fair**
- August 25-26 Huge Harford Yard Sale for Missionary**

Attention, Attention!!

The Lecture Hall will be unavailable for use:

**June 5-16 (Due to Multi-Church VBS)
July 22-August 2 (Due to Huge Yard Sale Prep)**

Home Bound

Martha Jenkins

Norma Carey

Lynola Carey

Dorothy Greene

Barbara Pease

Joanne Connolly

John Zimmerman

JoAnn Titus



Prayer Concerns

-We pray for our nation to be blessed and that our nation seeks its blessings

-We pray for our national and local leaders

-All school districts—All staff and students

-for those with medical issues large and small

-David and Brandy and family

-Those with Alzheimer's and their families

-those experiencing financial pressures

-those fighting addiction or cancer

-all those in nursing homes and their families

-Will's kids

-Evan Clarkson, Andrew Kazmierczak, Robert Schulte and all those serving in the military

-Sandy Zupanovich

-Gregg Symuleski and family

-Nancy Marr

-law enforcement officers & EMS

-hospital workers and fire personnel

-George Lotter

-Truck drivers, farmers & Small businesses

-Patrick Simons

-All earthquake victims

-Bob Simons

-Mark Ezdebski

-Dave Casey

-Earl Gow

-Karen Doolittle

-Mike (Tammy Stout's step-brother)

-The Irion family

-Little boy, Jagger (cancer)

-Ruth Ann Batzel

-Joe Lillis

-Sal Armetta and family

-Karen Jones relative

-John Zimmerman

-Lynn Hernandez

-Chris (Paula Smith's brother)

-Ginny and Charlie Ahearn

-Jeff Holgate

-Andy Granick

-Margaret Frederick

-Frank Boyle

-Marrazzo Family

-JoAnn Titus

-Joanne Zick

-War in Ukraine

-Family of Mary Ann Warren

-Baby Ruby

-Vivian Rutherford

-Millie Tingley

-Cheryl Augustine

-Kandy Wellman and father Robert Lane

-Julie Kesten

-Phil (Schulte's son)

-Valerie (Wendy Phillips' sister)

-Family of Jackie (Ivie Simon's friend)

-Abby Toolan's dad (Ben Heckman)

-Norma and Lynola Carey

-Teddy Kasmierczak

-John Lesniak (Tammy's step-father)

-the family of Olivia Zick

-Buzz Gulick

-Richard Frederick (Ray's brother)

-Grace and Dave Allen

-Family of Carl Oakley

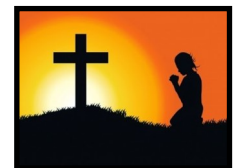
-Laura (George Lotter's friend)

-Family of Mona Adams

-Family of Tom Salansky

-Family of Ginny John

-Father of friend of Barb Parraga



Attention!

We are fully open for worship at 10:00 am each Sunday!

We have been eager to worship together again. We are now open!!! Our ushers and greeters will be present during the service.

Hymnals and Bibles may be utilized but all text will be available via our new monitors in the sanctuary. We would like to invite those who do not feel ready to worship in groups to watch our livestreaming worship at 10:00 am.



<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmQ-Xr0lE5xwdZS0yVs7dtg>



Men's Breakfast

April 11, 2023 at 7:30am

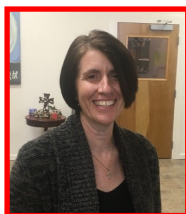
at Bingham's Restaurant.
The second Tuesday of each month.



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



Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church
Please contact Tammy if you have registered but do not plan to pick up.

Next distributions Friday, April 28, 2023 from 4:30-5:30
Friday, May 19, 2023 from 4:30-5:30

Any income can apply, complete the form online firstchurchharford.com or call Tammy @ 570-396-7081.

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

Women's Lunch

3rd Monday of each month

12:00 at Bingham's

All Welcome!

Bring a Friend



April Greeters and Ushers

April 2 - Dee Archer (Greeter/Usher)
Sharon Frantz (Usher)

April 23- Sue Needham (Greeter/Usher)
Irv Needham (Usher)

April 9 - Bill Chichester (Greeter/Usher)
Kay Gow (Usher)

April 30- Lynette Millard (Greeter/Usher)
Karen Jones (Usher)

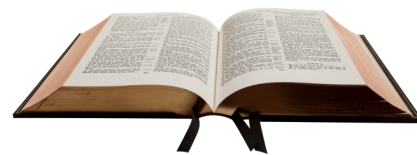
April 16- Sharon Decker (Greeter/Usher)
Judy Mitchell & Emma (Ushers)

If you would like to greet, usher or read during our worship services please contact the office.



April Lay Readers

April 2 Alice Archer
April 9 Kandy Wellman
April 16 Wendy Phillips
April 23 Gary Phillips
April 30 Peg Empet



Celebrate the joys in life!

Celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, weddings,
births, graduations and let us celebrate with you!

Contact Tammy at 570-396-7081

for more information or to request your celebration sign.



Attention!!

Our church is hosting a Multi-Church VBS this year June 12-15, 2023 We need space, star, galaxy, moon or astronaut related items to decorate the church. We also need a projector that projects stars on the ceiling and walls.

If you have these items to loan us please text or call
Holli that they are there so she can come
get them.



301-643-1775



Notice: Please send all material for May to be included in the Spire to:

Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of April 2023!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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 Harford First Congregational Church -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.



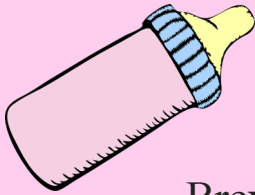
Thank you.

Problems or Issues regarding Harford First Congregational Church—UCC?

Pastoral Relations is the group that handles all concerns, issues and difficulties that can not be resolved directly. These meetings are confidential. Contact the office if you find that you need to meet with Pastoral Relations at **570-434-2260**.

Emails: It has come to our attention that some of you may not be receiving our email prayer lists. This is an oversight that we would like to correct. Please call or email Judy and let her know that you are not receiving the emails.





Welcome Babies!!!

Brexley Pat Smith
Born 2/27/23
Parents Katelyn Briggs and Zach Smith

Donna Elizabeth Zeske
Born 3/6/23
Parents Heather and Jim Zeske

Ellis Patrick Doolittle
Born 3/16/23
Parents Katherine and Eric Doolittle



Correspondence

Friends and members of First Church,

In light of the recent tragedy of the loss of my niece Oliva Zick, I am grateful for everyone who thought of me and the Mitchell and Zick families at this difficult time.

When a confusing situation arises, it is a comfort to know other folks care enough to send their blessings and prayers.

Thank you very much for yours.

They were gratefully appreciated, Judy



Spire Sponsor

Happy Easter

The Winemiller Family



VBS

Save the Date: June 12-15, 2023

10:00—12:30

**Multi-Church Vacation Bible School
At Harford First Congregational Church**

Three ways to register your children:

1. Online: www.firstchurchharford.com
Click on the VBS Banner
2. Call: 301-643-1775 Holli
3. Pick Up/Drop off Forms at one of the following churches:
Harford First Congregational Church
Hop Bottom UMC
Gibson UMC
Great Bend UMC
New Milford UMC
South Gibson UMC
Universalist Church - Brooklyn





Multi-Church Vacation Bible School

June 12-15, 2023

From 10:00-12:30

Online Registration: www.firstchurchharford.com

Click on the VBS Banner.

Or fill out the form below and take to participating church:

Parent's First Name: _____

Parent's Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____ **Telephone:** _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Child Registration:

1. Child's First and Last Name: _____

Allergy: _____ **Age:** _____ **Other:** _____

2. Child's First and Last Name: _____

Allergy: _____ **Age:** _____ **Other:** _____

3. Child's First and Last Name: _____

Allergy: _____ **Age:** _____ **Other:** _____

4. Child's First and Last Name: _____

Allergy: _____ **Age:** _____ **Other:** _____

5. Child's First and Last Name: _____

Allergy: _____ **Age:** _____ **Other:** _____

Harford First Congregational Church Golf Tournament

Saturday, June 10, 2023 9am



\$100/person- includes 18 holes with cart,

Donuts and Coffee, Hot Dog, prizes and Steak Dinner

Prizes: Closest to the pin, Longest drive, Closest to the Cooler, Basket Raffle, 50/50, Goodie Bag and more!!!

Holli Chichester: hollischichester@gmail.com
301-643-1775

**To benefit First Congregational Church **



**13th Annual Harford Congregational Church
Golf Tournament**

Saturday June 10, 2023 9:00am shotgun start



Golf Team Registration

Team Captain _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Team Players: _____

****Make checks payable to First Congregational UCC**

Contact/Mail to: Holli Chichester

1814 Tingley Lake Rd

New Milford, PA 18834

301-643-1775 or hollischichester@gmail.com

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU ENTER A TEAM AND JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN

\$100 per Golfer = \$400 per Team

Payable in Advance



**12th Annual Harford Congregational Church
Golf Tournament**

Saturday June 10, 2023 9am shotgun start



Hole Sponsor/Memorial Level:

GOLD-\$200

SILVER-\$100

BRONZE-\$50

Your Name _____

Address _____

Information for the Sign _____

Email _____

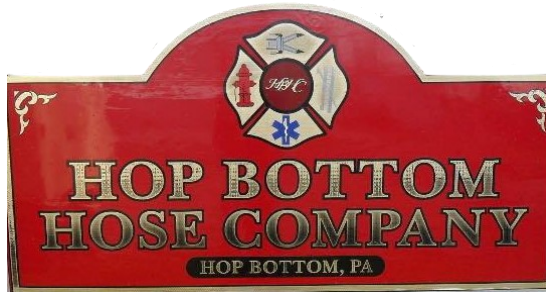
Phone _____

****Make checks payable to First Congregational UCC**

Contact/Mail to: Holli Chichester
1814 Tingley Lake Rd
New Milford, PA 18834
301-643-1775 or hollischichester@gmail.com

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU ENTER A TEAM
AND JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN

COMMUNITY TRAINING ANNOUNCEMENT



HOP BOTTOM HOSE COMPANY

South Center Street

Hop Bottom, PA 18824

April 22, 2023 – 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM

We are excited to announce the FIRST ON THE SCENE (FOTS) course designed to teach the general public basic emergency response to life-threatening emergencies until EMS arrives on the scene.

This course covers:

Activating the 911 system

Hands-only CPR and AED

Administering naloxone

Administering epinephrine

Responding to life-threatening bleeding

Penetrating chest trauma

Moving patients to safety

Positioning injured patients

This is a community education program. No prior First Aid training is needed to take this course.

No matter how rapid the arrival of professional emergency responders,

bystanders will always be first on the scene.



Geisinger

USCCA Countering the Mass Shoot Threat

We all pray we will never have to face violence, but sometimes it walks through the front door, even in a place where we should feel safe. Mass shootings have become all too familiar today and that is unacceptable. The cadre of instructors at New Milford Rifle and Pistol Club have responded to this by becoming credentialed as instructors for the USCCA Countering the Mass Shoot Threat. We are inviting anyone interested to attend this course.

The cost for this 4-6 hour class is \$15.00 per person.

There is also an optional textbook available if desired-cost \$25.

We are hoping to schedule this class **April 22 from 9:00-2:00**. Bring a bag lunch. Refreshments will be provided. Fill out the Short form at the bottom of the page.

CPR/AED Training

We are also offering AED/CPR training on May 6, 2023 from 9-12. This will teach participants how to administer CPR and how to use our new Automated External Defibrillator.

The class costs \$10 per participant. Fill out the form below and include the cost of the class.

Class Registration

Mass Shoot Threat Class (April 22, 2023 9:00-2:00):

Name _____

Phone Number: _____

Cost : \$15 _____ I want the text book: Yes No Cost \$25

CPR/AED Class (May 6, 2023 9:00-12:00):

Name : _____

Phone Number: _____

Cost \$10

Fill out this form and put it in the collection plate with your payment or send the form and the payment to:

First Church 5016 Creek Road. Harford, PA 18823.

Make checks payable to First Church.

For questions call or text Holli Chichester at 301-643-1775 or email hollischichester@gmail.com.

April 2023

| April 2023 | | | | | | | May 2023 | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa | Su | Mo | Tu | We | Th | Fr | Sa |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 30 | | | | | | | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Mar 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | Apr 1 |
| 7:30am Breakfast 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship | 9:30am Quarterback 9:30am Quarterback 7:00pm Trustees 7:30pm Fair Mtg (LH) | 9:30am Ugly Quilts 7:00pm Choir (MR) | 10:00am Golf mtg (LH) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) | 6:00pm Good Friday Service (Sanctuary) | 5:00pm Ham Bingo (Hop Bottom fire hall) |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 7:00am Sunrise Service 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship | 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 9:30am Ugly Quilts 1:00pm Missionary (LH) | 7:30am Men's Breakfast 9:00am Pastoral 9:30am Ugly Quilts 1:00pm Missionary (LH) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) | 6:00pm Good Friday Service (Sanctuary) | 11:30am Dottie Hagenbuch Service (Sanctuary/LH) |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship 11:20am Deacons | 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 12:00pm Ladies Lunch (Binghamms) | 9:30am Ugly Quilts 1:00pm Missionary 7:00pm Choir (MR) | 6:00pm Stewardship (LH) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) | 6:00pm Good Friday Service (Sanctuary) | 1:00pm Spaghetti dinner (Mason Lodge) |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship 11:20am Deacons | 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 12:00pm Ladies Lunch (Binghamms) | 9:30am Ugly Quilts 1:00pm Missionary 7:00pm Choir (MR) | 6:00pm Stewardship (LH) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) | 6:00pm Good Friday Service (Sanctuary) | 9:00am Mass shoot class (LH) |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship 7:00pm Scouts (LH) | 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) | 9:30am No Ugly Quilts 7:00pm Choir (MR) | 6:00pm Stewardship (LH) | 10:00am Pastor in office (Office) 6:00pm Council mtg (LH) | 4:30pm Weinberg Distribution (Outside) | 9:00am Clean-Up morning (Outside) |
| 30 | May 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 9:00am Sunday School 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Worship 7:00pm Scouts (LH) | | | | | | |

Non-Profit Organization

US Postage Paid

Permit—#20

Montrose, PA 18801

Harford First Congregational Church –UCC
5016 Creek Road
PO Box217
Harford, PA 18823
Tel.570-434-2260
Email: firstch@nep.net
Spire email: firstchurchspire@gmail.com
Web URL: www.firstchurchharford.com
Live Worship:https://www.youtube.com/
channel/UCmQ-Xr0IE5xwdZS0yVs7dtg

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

Isaiah 9:2

Join Us Each Sunday!!

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

DATED MAIL

PLEASE DO NOT DELAY



Harford First Congregational Church—UCC

Rev. Dr. William Hagenbuch –Pastor
Home Phone: 570-434-7729
Email: wrh@nep.net
Office Hours: Thurs. 10-12:00

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