



Our Spire

Volume 41

March 2021

Number 2

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

Pastor's Page—Community Church

Each congregation does what it can do. As congregations, we all hold pieces in Christ's potential ministry actualized here on earth. And this? This is exciting!

We should not compare one congregation to another, one church to another. As communities, we each have our place, our opportunities, our challenges, our strengths as well as those ministry places that just aren't there yet.

I share this because I see this congregation's presence—this congregation's ministry—reaching further into the community. Honestly, this is a HUGE thing to say because there is always more to do. There are always houses to reach, always more people to greet, and always more neighbors to connect with and unite. But we're here. Collectively, we are saying in bold prayer, "Lord, use us. Lord, speak through us. Lord, be in us, and in turn, in our reach toward others."

With the kiddos, I have not done outbound ministry since Covid-19 hit almost a year ago. On Valentine's Day however, and you can read the report on this here in this edition, we trekked out by van onto the snow-packed highways and byways around 5016 Creek Road, which is the physical address of the church. Sadly, but honestly, we missed far, far more people than we are able to meet, but something is better than nothing. A little hope and love in one place spreads to hope and love elsewhere.

See with me, that this church, through the virus, is not still. It is not quiet. Instead, we, as a congregation, have spread beyond walls. We have had to. And we've done it, not alone, but by and through the Holy Spirit. It is as if there is something in the air like that lingering, heavenly scent of multiflora rose at that point in the summer where even winter lovers like me find rest and hope and love in the balmy days of the year. We are guided. We are growing.

This growth takes place during tremendous, immeasurable losses accrued through the virus, and land us in scarring, painful places. This is a reality. But there is a gain. We are out there far more. This "being out there," of course, is not by choice. With no one attending worship the way we did, we see that church and community are no longer distinct. They are no longer separate. If you would like to know more of what I mean here, or if you'd like to experience more of what I mean here, I invite you to participate (not 'watch' but participate) in worship virtually. So many of you near and far are doing this (and this is awesome!), so I am going to ramp this up a bit. So, more specifically, I invite you to participate in worship in as public a space as you can find, even if that means you are able to look out a window to the world as you experience God in the music and message of the service. You'll notice something as you peer into the world. No, it's not the white wood trim with the historic blue walls and handsome red carpet; *it's worship beyond a building*. It is connecting to God in God's world beyond a closed-door community. I know the phrase "closed door community" stings for you as much as it does for me, but this is literally true. We don't worship with doors literally open, especially in the wintertime. (I can see at least four Trustees with stone faces if any of you even *think* of opening those doors through the late snowy, frosty season!)

Here is where I feel God is leading us. To worship in a world, that may seem secular to some, is our witness, our opportunity to make what some would call unholy ground into the holy ground? Well, that is community church. We cannot undo this virus. We can certainly claim to be victimized by it, or, knowing God has a plan for us even in times of trial and tribulation, we can follow Him. We can hold and share in our demeanor the aura—the essence—of worship as we glance up from our handheld devices as we wait for our vehicle's oil to be changed, for example. No, God is not done with His command to go and make disciples of this world (Matthew 28:19). He is opening us—challenging us—equipping us—to bring His message and its meaning to the world. And that, dear community church, is well beyond exciting.

Happy Anniversary COVID-19

I was ready to checkout. I set my items on the drug store counter. The cashier wasn't behind the registrar, so I turned to see where the associate might be. It was then that I spotted a small display of Valentine's Day items at my bargain-loving price of 50% off. Nothing for me or my munchkins. The associate, having come up an aisle and was now standing at the register, directed me to more Valentine sweets at a reduced price. It was then that I spotted what I have not seen in all my February Valentine shopping madness. (For those of you who do not know, I LOVE Valentine's Day). Facemasks! Valentine's Day Facemasks! What can I buy and hold onto these for next year? And then the thought hit me. Another year of masks. Almost Anniversary, dear COVID-19. A whole year of this. Unimaginable.

As I sit here and think of what was, what is, and what is still unknown to us in the months ahead, I am reminded of the year 586 BC. That was the year the city that would never fall—Jerusalem—fell into the enemy hands of the Babylonians. The elites and the socialites were carted off as spoils of the war, loot as it were. The people of God became slaves. Specifically, they became slaves in a foreign land with foreign gods. This wasn't a two-week or two-year ordeal. This enslavement became generational. Where...Was...God.

It's unfathomable to imagine this historic event in all its magnitude. This point in our Judeo-Christian history does, however, help us understand that God's plan and God's timing are not ours. Equally, this helps us understand our suffering Servant, Jesus. As Christians, we are not placed here on earth for pleasant or even pretty experiences. This thing called life, specifically, this thing called the Christian life, can be painful!

This pain defines us. Of course, this pain—this deep discomfort—is not welcome, but it is received. Here we are learning to be patient in suffering, persistent in hope, and ready to share with all the promise God makes through each and every generation that reads and holds to His word: our God is with us. He will deliver us. He will set us free.

Another memory comes to mind that may help you understand who and how God is through this time of the pandemic. I was a Jersey shore lifeguard back in the day. I spent two wonderful summers on the beach. Yes, it was a dream come true!

Manasquan, New Jersey, the beach town I called home over those two summers, has a mile-long beach. The mile is divided into thirds—north, main and south. Each divide had a captain. I was assigned to the north. We were known as the north end anchors. I loosely use the word “we” here because then, like now, I am 5'10”, 170 pounds. And it is true. I am no anchor. The linebacker guys I worked with, however, were. Big dudes. In rough tide, I was the one in the water with the rope around what we called a ‘toy’, the iconic red floatation device used to help swimmers out of danger. **These burly guys, in a line on the sand, would pull me so fast out of the water that I had to make sure the drawstring around my shorts was indeed tight. They were that strong. They were that good as powerhouses to pull me and whomever I was with out of danger.**

There is no exaggeration here. Our captain, Doug Bowers, said something that reflects upon the situation the exiled people in Babylon experienced. During rough water when you are under water and the churning tide is most like a monstrous washing machine on beyond too powerful spin cycle, he said what is true. You will always float. You will always come to the top—eventually.

Just like those enslaved so far from home, we will get through this. Our anchor is God. Jesus is that red floatation device. *Hold onto Him*. Like me, you may have to cinch your drawstring a little tighter on the ride, but we are going to get out of this.

Then, when on safe sand again, we can repurpose those Valentine facemasks. Help me out here as to what to do with them. The beach on windy days is great for kite flying. Maybe use the masks as bows on the tail just below the kites themselves?

A prayer for those lost to Covid

If we held a minute's silence consecutively for every one of the 500,000 people who have died from Covid in the US, it would take 347 days, almost a full year, to honor them all (Source: Yahoo News).

PRAYER: Lord, this amount of loss is numbing, tragic, overwhelming, daunting, disastrous. Many of us complain or at least feel burdened by mask wearing and other restrictions. We are weary, worried, tired, heavy, and as the one year mark approaches, we are just plain "done." Add to this the amount of memorializing we must do as a nation can seem to be too much.

All of this is too much. And then, to add to this, there is always the question when our safety has been breached: who will be next?

When the number of Covid deaths topped the number of deaths from World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War combined, we have to realize, heavenly Father, that You, our God, hear us. You are with us.

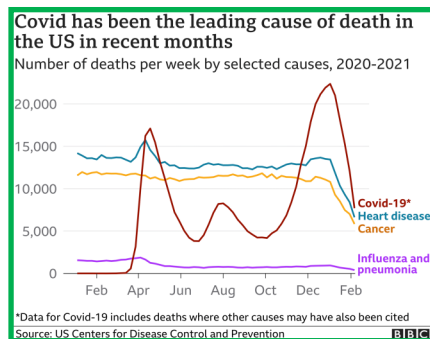
Our grief is Your grief, too. Our cries are heard. Our loss is felt. Our tears affect You. You weep, too.

Help us to see that, even through this global nightmare, that You remain with all of us. We are not silent nor silenced, for You work in us and through us. Your message of salvation and peace rises through the mourning and delivers hope.

We pray for those who are without a loved one due to the virus or any other reason death has come too soon. We pray for those who cannot see a loved one because of this pandemic. We pray for those who doubt or hold darken thoughts about who You are.

We rest in You. We find strength in You. We find our way into tomorrow with You, our God of endless love and abiding comfort.

Amen.



In Loving Memory of our brother Scott Klenk



Spire Sponsor

Dear Congregation, Blessings this Lenten season!

This is the first of six letters that has been (or will be) written to the churches of the Route 11 Ministerium this 2021 Lenten season. For the next six weeks, a pastor from the ministerium will be writing to the congregations that comprise the ministerium. This first letter (below) was written by Pastor Laura Kincaid from the First United Methodist Church of New Milford. Every congregation in the ecumenical group has received this letter for distribution.

Pastor John Shaffer from the Methodist Churches in Hop Bottom and Kingsley will send his letter out next week. I will send my letter to each congregation the following Wednesday, March 10th. The remaining pastors in the group will fill out the rest of the Lenten schedule.

Look forward to letters for the next five weeks. United in Christ we serve, Will

“Let’s Train with Jesus”

by Pastor Laura Kincaid, First UMC New Milford

Scripture: Matthew 4:1-11

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tested by the devil.” In my life, the phrase “led by the Spirit to be tested” is the same as “My alarm clock went off and a new day started.”

How can we be like Jesus in times of testing? Jesus trained constantly for times of testing, like we might train at the gym. But Jesus wasn’t on a treadmill. Jesus trained through fasting, prayer, and remembering scripture, and that made all the difference. Lent is an invitation for us to join Jesus in these spiritual disciplines so that we may be ready for our times of testing.

Fasting is not very popular today, other than when one is dieting, but fasting is not a diet. Fasting is the practice of giving up food, or a certain kind of food, for a limited space of time. For example, someone may give up desserts for Lent, or not drink soda one day a week. Fasting isn’t limited to food; one may also give up TV time, or social media, or complaining. The idea is to give up something that will create a space in our life - a space we usually fill up with food or entertainment - and then give that space to God. I have been fasting once a week for several years now, and even though I still inwardly groan whenever fasting day is here, I recognize the important things fasting does inside me. It pulls me out of my self-focus. It is hard to watch everyone else eating whatever they want while I can’t - it humbles me, and makes me aware of all the billions of people around the world who don’t get enough to eat any day. Fasting puts me in my rightful place - a place of humility and gratitude.

But giving something up is only half the picture. Giving something up for a fast leaves a space - what will we do with it? Well, we can guess that Jesus probably wasn’t out in the desert for 40 days just kicking sand and wishing it was over! We know that when Jesus had time, he prayed.

The word “prayer” in the New Testament translates literally to “interact with the Lord by switching human wishes for the Lord’s wishes as he imparts faith.” Think about that for a minute. Switch our human wishes for the Lord’s wishes. And isn’t that exactly what Jesus does when he is tempted? “Turn stones to bread.” Jesus says “I want the word of God more.” “Throw yourself off this temple and let’s see how your divine insurance policy works.” Jesus says “God wants me to trust Him without having to see miracles on command.” “You can have it all if you worship me.” Jesus says “Worship is for God alone, nothing else has lasting value.” A life rooted in prayer helps us to see God’s focus in any given situation, and that is why prayer is vital.

One more tip from the Savior in times of testing: What does Jesus say every time he is tested? “It is written.” Where is it written? In the scriptures! Instead of stocking up on toilet paper, let’s stock up our brains with scripture! Even having just one key verse ready to go at all times can be the difference between success and failure in our tests!

If Jesus needed to train for his testing, how much more do we need to? Let’s follow His example, so we are ready for whatever tests lie ahead!

Getting to know you - Hi! I am new in town, and we probably haven’t seen each other without masks if we have seen each other at all! I am the new pastor at First United Methodist Church of New Milford, and I moved here in July with my husband and his mother. The kids are grown and off in the world, so all we have are 5 cats to boss around. We are looking forward to getting to know all of you in this beautiful corner of PA when everything opens up again!

Laura Kincaid

Valentine's Day On The Move Flowers delivered to some of our best loved

On Sunday, February 14th, Pastor Will, Michaela Stout, and all five of Will's kids packed the van with flowers and headed out on a special mission—to fill hearts with love on Valentine's Day.

20 vases of arrangements from Marchos florist were delivered to each tenant at the HVA. 60 carnations were distributed through the community.

The trip was all love. It was fun. Most of all, it was important.

“There is no way that we can reach everyone,” Will said, “but we can reach some. And that's something for all of us.”

The most challenging part of the trip was actually finding people home. Who would have thought that so many people would be out on a snowy Valentine's Day afternoon?

Those they did reach received the flowers well.

At the HVA, for example, Alice Archer, our special inhouse delivery person, had joy in her footsteps as so many flowers went to those who, given the pandemic and the time of the year, really are not getting out very much. The flowers with ribbons in their vases were well received.

Others that afternoon were caught in complete surprise, including a man in the middle of a work project out on Adams Road. He took the flowers with a smile.

8-year-old Taven, Will's oldest foster child, said it best. “God shows up in flowers. Especially now. This is a great way to let people know He's here. With us.”

The flowers were a gift from the Youth and Outreach program at the church. Michaela has a particular “heart” for this mission work. She is open to receiving new ideas on how to further this ministry. Young people are always welcome to come with her and Pastor Will.



Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Harford First Congregational Church-UCC was held in the sanctuary following church on Sunday, January 21, 2021. Moderator David Schulte called the meeting to order at 11:09AM. Pastor William Hagenbuch offered a prayer. The sign in sheet showed 20 adults present. In breaking with tradition, there was no luncheon served due to COVID rules.

Reports from the Annual Report were reviewed with a few additions.

Pastor's Report addition My 3-page report this year was the longest I've ever contributed to an annual meeting. Given the year we had in 2020, the report could have been twice as long. So much happened since mid-March of this past year. Death tolls rise, loss continues, and hope, which at times can seem hard to find, is grounded in the Word of God.

Here, I want to thank each committee and hardworking group represented in these pages. Your energies and your efforts inspire others. Keep fishing for people.

When the world gave us a wall with this ongoing Corona virus and great loss and lasting separation occurred, you found ways to make doors and windows to keep what you love, which are the people of this congregation, connected. I am blessed and I am humbled to work with you. Our God has taught us a great deal about how our trust in Him continues to yield results in His Kingdom.

These words will be read a year from now in next year's report at the start of 2022. We will not forget how worship was challenged, how gathering was challenged, and how God met each of those challenges with His love and His grace, His mercy and His tenderness. Yes, even when we cannot gather as we have, our God still gathers us and keeps us in His care.

Treasurer's report additions---Following the report, David Schulte pointed out that in 2020 we took in \$131,685.45 and spent \$124,089.04. That looks good because we finished the year on the plus side but if we had spent what was proposed in the budget, we would have spent beyond the funds taken in. The congregation was thanked for careful spending. David offered a caution that the members will need to be very careful financially in 2021.

Nominating revisions-Julie Gardner offered an observation on the slate of officers. Kay Gow had been nominated to be a trustee but because trustees suggest a salary for church employees this was a conflict of interest as Kay is the custodian. To remedy that situation, Kandy Wellman offered to switch committees with Kay so Kay will fill the last year of Kandy's stewardship (for 2021). Kandy will fulfill Kay's trustee nomination ('21-'22-'23). Because of the resignation of David Schulte III from Deacons, Lisa Hahn's term will only be '21-'22 as she will fulfill the last two years of David's term. For Stewardship, Ellen Holdredge will be filling Joe Kulyeshie's last year so Ellen's term of office will only be for 2021. Moderator, David Schulte asked if there were any further nominations from the floor. Hearing none, the nominations were closed. There was a motion by Gus Ferrara with a second by Kay Gow that the acting clerk cast the electing ballot. Passed. Acting clerk, Ellen Holdredge declared the nominees elected. Thanks to Wendy Phillips for the full slate of officers.

The meeting adjourned at 11:35AM.

Ellen Holdredge, Acting secretary

Council Minutes

2-25-2021

Dave Schulte was elected President and Maureen Warren Vice-President.

Treasurer: To make expenses every month in general we will need \$12,895.83 a month to meet our Budget 2021.

January 2020

Income: \$8160.14

Expense: \$11,601.29

January 2021

Income: \$16,105.70

Expense: \$14,817.03

New Business: It was proposed to form a Technology team to help improve our online presence. Council approved this team. Members: Craig Stout, Tammy Stout (Deacon), Will Hagenbuch, Holli Chichester (Deacon), Gus Ferrara (Choir), Judy Mitchell, A Trustee representative (TBD), Michelle Estabrook (Stewardship). Also recommend adding Technology to the budget next year.

The Boy Scouts will begin meeting every Sunday evening at 7:00 beginning in March.

Willing Workers: Cupboards installed in the Gathering room. Private donor provided a cabinet in the Ladies' Room. February meeting canceled due to snow. The tall freezer was defrosted and cleaned. The Fair Board has asked if Willing Workers to declare if they wish a spot at the fair so a meeting will be held March 2 at 1:00 in the Lecture Hall.

PASTOR'S REPORT

-The first sermon series this year was "Good Grief: life (and love) lessons from God in the New Year". I believe a sermon series enables all congregations greater buy-in, investment, education, and understanding of scripture.

-The two-part "Rest in Jesus" series began at the start of February. February 7 was also Boy Scout Sunday, it was great to see these talented, visionary young leaders of the present and the future grasp what it means to rest only to return more focused in the call the Lord has for us.

-For Lent, I have begun a first-time Lenten Devotional Series. Each day during Lent I am bringing scripture along with a short devotion. These devotions are on our website, our church Facebook page, my home page, and our church email. The devotionals are also being mailed to our shut ins.

-I am grateful to work with the Stewardship Committee this year. I appreciate how stewardship is being defined and redefined in our age. This role is changing, being more of a presence throughout the year, rather than a Big Money times.

-A great gift we have all appreciated is Bonnie Love-Colwell at the pulpit during our Ash Wednesday service. Bonnie has had both Covid shots and did a tremendous job keeping the congregation safe. Lisa Hahn, who has also had both shots, completed the two-person care team when it came to the distribution of ashes. Q-tips were used and both women deacons went to those in the pews.

-Here is a good time to mention safety. Worship on Sunday is a gift, we are blessed that we can still gather. This is because of mask wearing (even when we sing) and social distancing. We do have to use all the cautions we have available to us when it comes to CDC guidelines.

-I have made two hospital visits recently. I visited Rupert Carey per request of his sisters. I also visited Joe Vietri's mom, Betty Vietri. Betty's memorial service is tomorrow (February 26). The service will be held at the Rock Mountain Bible Camp.

-Please continue to enjoy "Letters For Lent," the ministerium's ministry this Lenten season. We began this past week with a letter from Pastor Laura Kincaid of the New Milford Methodist church. All the pastors in the corridor are contributing.

CE Minutes—January 21, 2021

-The main topic of discussion was how we were going to resume Sunday School and still insure the safety of the children who would be attending. It was decided to begin Sunday School with Pastor Will's children to get them acclimated to the routine and once that is done we will invite other children to attend.

-Bonnie is going to start with the children on January 28th. They will be in church until Pastor Will begins the sermon and then they will leave to go downstairs for Sunday School. They will be sitting with either Bonnie or Kay.

-The meeting ended in prayer. No date was set for the next meeting.

Church Cupboard

One family served. Have switched to grocery gift cards instead of food items. All food was donated to the Emergency Food Program in Hop Bottom via Missionary Group.

Cradle Roll

One child received “ If Jesus Lived in My Heart” and the 3-year-old letter.

Deacon Minutes

-Our former Chairperson, Kay Gow, joined at the beginning of the meeting to wish us well. Kay opened the meeting with prayer.

-The Deacon's discussed the upcoming Ash Wednesday Service this coming Wednesday, February 17, 2021. Bonnie will distribute the ashes because she has received both vaccinations and will be over 10 days. We will use Q-Tips to apply the ashes to the congregants. Bonnie will also give the sermon.

-The Route 11 ministry will not hold their weekly in person Lenten Services this year due to COVID-19. Each Pastor has been assigned a week and will send out, via email, their daily meditation.

-We nominated members for our Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Lisa, Tammy, and Holli were nominated, but they will take the time to think and pray over the nomination. Katherine will remain secretary.

-We will discuss our Easter Service at our next meeting. Pastor Will closed the meeting in prayer.

-Next meeting will be Monday, March 15th @ 7:30pm via Zoom. Bonnie will send out the Zoom invitation the day of.

Game On

Youth and Outreach donated \$300 to Laura's Hope Recue and \$300 to Griffin Pond Animal Rescue.

Historian

An average of 28 people have attended each Sunday.

Missionary

The February meeting was cancelled due to snow.

The Emergency Food collection is continuing for distribution in Hop Bottom.

Items are being gathered for the upcoming Yard Sale.

Next Meeting :March 16, 2021 at 1:00 in the Lecture Hall

Stewardship Minutes-February 21, 2021

Craig opened the meeting. Empet was nominated for Chairperson and Shirley Masters for Vice-Chair. Both ladies graciously accepted the positions. Kay Gow took the Secretary position and Michelle Estabrook will be the representative to Council.

Peg brought copies of the church calendar which shows what we as a church have planned for every month to reach out to the community and so we don't have too many things going on at the same time. One Great Hour of Sharing was discussed and it was decided to begin the campaign on March 14th and it will end April 11th. Kay will check with Judy to see if we have received any materials we can use. Kay will begin presenting the campaign on March 14th, Nancy on the 21st, Michelle on the 28th, and Ellen will end the campaign on April 11th.

We looked at the financial paperwork Julia Gardner had left.

Craig then mentioned about a Tech Team Committee which if Council approves will have a representative from each committee. One Deacon, Trustee, and Stewardship. Tammy Stout will also be on this committee as she is the one who videos the service for those who watch from home to view. The committee would be responsible for getting our technology up-to-date and keep it that way. Also the committee would require a budget line each year. Michelle volunteered to be the representative from Stewardship with Kay as an alternate. If Council approves the first meeting will be February 28th after church.

Also discussed was a new day and time for the Stewardship meeting. It was decided to go back to the third Thursday of the month and the time would be 6:30 P.M.. The meeting will take place in the Lecture Hall to maintain social distancing.

Pastor Will asked the committee to think about ways we could gift our congregation members, non-members, and the wider community.

Pastor Will closed the meeting in prayer. The next meeting will be March 18th @ 6:30 in the Lecture Hall.

Trustee Meeting Minutes—February 8, 2021

New Business: New Officers were installed as follows:

Chair Person:	Gary Housel
Vice-Chairperson:	Rich Masters
Secretary:	Rick Masters
Representative to Council:	Bill Chichester
Report for Spire & Minutes:	Rick Masters

Trustees will hold meetings on the second Monday of the month at 7pm in Pastors office. The weather stripping on the bottom of the door to the lecture hall needs to be replaced again. It was recently replaced but is being damaged by people propping the door open with a concrete block. Gary will see if it can be adjusted again or if something can be installed to keep the door open without damaging it. Gary placed a hook on the outside of the church to hold the alley door open. The vinyl flooring in the Vestibule continues to separate. Trustees discussed the possibilities of repairs that could be made or replacing it portions of it or all of it.

Switched propane provider from Kestone to Heller and electricity from Constellation to New Wave.

Old Business: The light in the alley near the Kitchen entrance has been replaced with a new LED light and fixture. Measure Square Footage of driveway and parking area for concrete. Gary received proposals to replace lamp posts and lamps in front of the church from Spectrum Electric. The proposal included the cost of replacing one post and fixture and upgrading the existing fixture to match. Rich Masters made a motion to replace both lamp posts and fixtures for a total cost of around \$3,500. Council approved the lamp post expenditure and added a spot light on the ground to light the Harford side of the steeple from Capital Funds.

And here comes Lent.

Lent Day 1: An Ash Wednesday Prayer

Gracious God,

Today begins a season of inner reflection and examination. The days stretch before us and invite us inward to that silent, holy space that holds Your Spirit.

This special time—this inward time—beckons us to see our lives through Christ's eyes and the truth and reality of Your love incarnate. Beautiful. Powerful. Liberating. Guiding. Grounding.

Give us the grace to enter the space of these days with anticipation of our meeting You, our God. And, when we open our souls to Your presence through these devotions, let Your loving kindness flow over us and seep into the pockets of our hearts.

We ask this for the sake of Your love on earth as it is in Heaven. Amen.

Lent Day 2: Hosea 12:6 But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always.

Lent Day 3: 1 Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Lent Day 4: Isaiah 58:6 "No, This is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you. Let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind.

Lent Day 5: Psalm 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, For the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Lent Day 6: Joel 2:13 Don't tear your clothing in grief, but tear your hearts instead. Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.

Lent Day 7: Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Lent Day 8: Lamentations 3:25 The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him.



New Members Class

The pastoral relations team met in January and want to announce that a new membership class will be taking place as soon as it is safe enough for many people to gather.

Stay tuned for details!



Youth and Outreach NEWS

To start the new year off Youth and Outreach discussed with the youth how they felt would be a good way to share some of the funds they have raised in the past for ARC.

It was decided among them that ARC would donate \$300 each to both Laura's Hope Rescue as well as Griffin Pond Animal Shelter. Griffin Pond recently played a huge roll in helping to gain control of a feral cat issue in Harford and Laura's Hope continues to do so much for our community that both are greatly appreciated!

Pictured are Bailey Millard and Mikalea Stout presenting Laurie Grant and "Holly" ,a rescue from Laura's Hope with a check from ARC. Also pictured are Ben and Emma Demark presenting Ashley Wolo and " Bailey" with a check from ARC.



Bailey and Mikaela delivery a donation from ARC to Laurie Grant from Laura's Hope Rescue

Ben and Emma present a donation from ARC to Ashley Wolo of Griffin Pond Animal Shelter.



Emergency Food Distribution

Hop Bottom Fire Hall

Paula Smith, the Summer Lunchbox CEO, noticed that some of the extra Summer Lunchbox food would expire before summer 2021. She got with her church's food pantry (Hop Bottom United Methodist Church) and offered a food distribution in December 2020, once a week, on Wednesday. The first few weeks 25-30 families were served. The last week in December over 100 families came for relief food.

The employment situation and food situation continue to grow worse here in the MountainView School District. The Missionary Group is asking the congregation to join them in collecting food items for this food distribution. Many of the people served by the Summer Lunch Program are coming asking for help.

The food items are different than the Weinberg Food Bank. The items are selected specifically to meet the needs of school age children. The list of needed items are below. The Peanut Butter collection barrel will be set on the porch by the double glass doors for food drop off every day that weather permits.

If you wish to make a monetary donation, please make the check out to Harford First Congregational Church and put "Hop Bottom Food" in the memo spot.

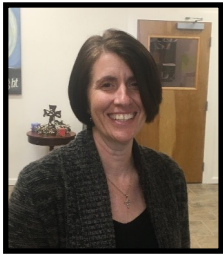
Food Items Needed

Boxed Cereal (Child Friendly Types)	Pasta (all)
Ramen Noodles	Pasta Sauce (all)
Canned Soup (all)	Canned Tuna (water packed)
Peanut Butter	Jelly
Macaroni & Cheese	Mayonnaise
Pancake Mix	Syrup
Popcorn (microwave type)	
Canned Fruit (Peaches, Pears, Fruit Cocktail, Applesauce)	
Canned Vegetables (Green Beans, Peas, Corn, Mixed Vegetables)	

Soup Ministry

Know someone that is shut-in or feeling down or sick? Take them a quart of home-made soup. It's in the large freezer by the church mailboxes. Just sign the paper on the door to let us know who received the soup.





Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church
The 4th Friday of each month



Please contact Tammy if you have registered but do not plan to pick up.

Next distribution March 26, 2021 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.

Facebook First Church Chopped

Have you ever watched the reality show “Chopped” and thought, “Wow! This looks like fun!”? Have you ever picked up your Weinberg Food Pantry box and said “Wow! What do you do with a cabbage the size of a Volkswagen?” Here’s where reality TV meets reality!



We would like to welcome you to join our NEW Facebook group “**First Church Chopped**”. This is a Facebook group dedicated to fully appreciating our food boxes, distributed monthly by Weinberg Foodbank. During these difficult times, food boxes are a reminder that we are not alone and isolated. Our church and the community along with Weinberg are here to help and support us. We encourage you to search for “**First Church Chopped**” on Facebook and join us for a fun way to connect with others to find recipes, as well share your own creative ways you have found to use the foods you have received from Weinberg!

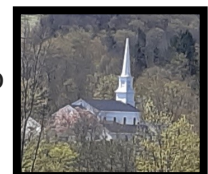
We look forward to sharing with you! Patti Vietri and Tammy Stout

Attention! The worship service will be livestreamed live at 10:00 am each Sunday.

We have been eager to worship together again. We are now meeting in groups with masks, distance, and additional sanitizing.

We would like to invite those who feel ready to worship in groups to come to the livestreaming of our worship at 10:00 am. Masks are mandatory. We must keep our distance. We will not use the hymnals and Bibles or have bulletins. All needed text will be projected for you.

For those who feel it is best to stay at home and continue online worship, please know our council supports and appreciates your participation. Safety first is a key to our wellbeing.



We look forward to worshipping with you online or in person each Sunday at 10 am.

Correspondence

Thank you so much for the lovely carnations that were delivered to my door on Valentine's Day. I feel truly honored to be remembered. On Sunday's I'm with you in spirit, if not in person. Being able to see the service via the internet is indeed a blessing. Thanks to all who make it possible. Jean Bonham

Dear Members of Harford First Congregational Church,

Happy New year everyone! Thank you so, so much for the Weis gift card for Christmas. How kind of your congregation to acknowledge the teachers at Mt.View. It hasn't been an easy school year, but your generosity has made it a bit brighter!

Happy New Year, Karen Zaums

Dear Congregational Church,

We thank all the members and friends for the prayers and cards.

Pastor Will, the prayer you wrote was truly Willi.

We thank you for the kind words.

God Bless, Lili, Karin, Kevin Reuss and family

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the holiday greetings, the Weis gift card and your kind words. I have been part of the Mountain View family since 1992 and have always been proud to work with this community and their families. Your thoughtfulness is much appreciated!

Patti Dietrich, Autistic Support Teacher, Mountain View High School



I haven't had any new news to post for a while. Had a CT scan yesterday and it showed shrinkage in the tumor on my pancreas and the spots on my stomach! Long story short, between chemo, my medical team, and all of you prayer warriors, results are positive!!

Every step of this journey, God continues to pour His blessings on us!

Because He Lives, I can CONTINUE to face tomorrow!

Craig Stout

Home Bound

The Carey Family

Barbara Pease

Martha Jenkins

Dorothy Greene

Joan Benson



Prayer Concerns

- We pray for our nation to be blessed and that our nation seeks its blessings
- We pray our national and local leaders
- All school districts—this includes school board members, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students
- Craig Stout and Family
- We pray for Connie and David Schulte's son (Phil)
- for those with medical issues large and small
- for those affected in anyway by the COVID virus
- David and Brandy
- Those with Alzheimer's and their families
- Gary and Wendy Phillips
- the Carey family
- Ray Frederick
- those experiencing financial pressures
- those fighting addiction
- Joan Benson & Lois Gibson and all those in nursing homes along with their families
- Will's five foster kids
- Evan Clarkson and all those faithfully serving in the military
- MaryJane Genneken
- Marlene & Larry Dean
- Rich Masters
- Sandy Zupanovich
- UCC churches in Japan
- Greg Symuleski
- Family of Kathy Swaha
- health or loss of family pets

- Nancy Marr
- Jim Shaw
- Lance Tabaca
- Walter Poxon & sister Lois Terrance and Angie
- Kandy's friend Mary Keihl (ALS)
- Dottie Hagenbuch's (family member with Leukemia)
- Family of John Beaver
- Brian Estabrook
- Family of Linda Canfield (Gail Batzel's aunt)
- Jessica Miller's grandfather (Bill Brooks)
- Healing for Jacob Lucas
- Marilynn & Richard (Marylou Swank)
- Small businesses struggling
- Patrick Simons
- Doris Holtsmaster Schenck
- George Zack
- Joe Megivern
- Family of Laura (cousin of Teresa Lamberson)
- family of Julian Williams
- family of Josh Manzer
- mother of Sandy Green
- Family of John Michaels
- Kevin Handwerk's step-daughter has passed. She leaves behind three young children. Kevin is the son of our former Pastor Lamar Handwerk



Directory Update

Nancy Marr
Allied Acute Rehab Hospital
475 Morgan Highway Rm 316 W
Scranton, PA. 18508
PHONE (570) 341-4478

Mr./Mrs. Ed/Sandy Tingley
176 Tingley Lake Road
Harford, PA 18823
570-396-0205-Sandy
570-947-4205-Ed

Please correct Dale Ferger's
Telephone #607-857-2697

Stewart/Lynette Latimer
190 West Golf PL
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
(May to October)



Cindi Morrison
404 Pecan Street
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420

Family of John Michaels
131 School Street
Harford, PA 18823

Memorial Plaque Information

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

Cost--\$25.00

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

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



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

Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of March 2021!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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. Please send to: Harford First Congregational Church—UCC

PO Box 217

Harford, PA 18823

Ugly Quilts

We are now meeting for Ugly Quilts in the lecture hall on Tuesdays at 9:30.

We will sit far apart. Bring your mask and lunch if you can stay until 12:00 so that we may dine together. Ellen has some tops completed and I have been working on making stuffing during the summer. Bring a friend.

Come at 9:30 and stay until after lunch or come at 10:30 and leave whenever.

Looking forward to seeing you. Thank you, Judy



March Birthdays



March 01 Barbara Weideman

March 03 Katherine Doolittle

Kassandra Lamberson

March 04 Dorothy Greene
110 Woods Dr
Landsdale, PA 19446t

March 05 Erika Lewis Gething

March 07 Dale Grant

March 8 Barb Sloat 90th
672 Bartholomew Rd
Kingsley, Pa 18826

March 10 Nicholas (Weideman's grandson)

March 11 Cindy Millard Galamos
Judy Mitchell

March 12 Lyra Brosius
Scott Muller

March 14 Harry and Julia Gardner
Ethan Rodriguez

March 20 Linda Arthur

March 22 Peg Empet
Liz Grant

March 25 Gus Ferrara

March 26 Susie Chidester

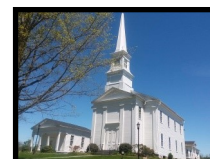
The Website is up and running.

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



Kingsley Willing Workers Soup Sale

March 21 after church

Last soup sale until next year

This is a **presale only** soup sale.

Quarts-\$7.50

These are the kinds of soup that we are offering this month:

Squash Apple

Chicken Cheese Broccoli

Chicken Corn Chowder

Chicken Noodle

Hamburger Vegetable Barley

Hot sausage tortellini

Mexican Corn & Bean Chowder

Mushroom Leek

Taco Soup



Pre Order: Call or email Judy----jmm@nep.net

570-396-8184

570-434-2716

Pay the day of pick up. 11:15 after service.

If one lives close to Harford we will consider delivering.

Thank you for supporting the Kingsley Willing Workers

It's Time to Winter-Spring Clean!!!!

The Missionary Group is sponsoring a yard sale, date TBA.

We will be collecting anything to be sold in a yard sale:

Clothing, shoes, bedding, electrical appliances, lighting, TVs, furniture, household items, kitchen items, tools, yard stuff, toys, baby items, bikes, decorations etc.

Please bring any items to the lecture hall and label them "Yard Sale".

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

Thank you, Missionary Group



2021 LILY ORDER FORM



Please order:

_____ lily plants at \$ 7.50 = \$ _____ (total price)

Given By: _____ **I would like to donate these lily/lilies to shut-in outreach** ___ yes ___ no

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

“DEADLINE March 21, 2021”

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

Mail order and payment to: First Congregational-UCC , P. O. Box 217 , Harford, PA 18823

2021 LILY ORDER FORM



Please order:

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Given By: : _____ **I would like to donate these lily/lilies to shut-in outreach** ___ yes ___ no

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

“DEADLINE March 21, 2021”

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

Mail order and payment to: First Congregational-UCC, P. O. Box 217, Harford, PA 18823

March 2021

March 2021							April 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31										

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Feb 28	Mar 1 9:30am 9:30 mtg-Zoom	2 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	3	4 10:30am Pastor in office	5	6
7 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	8 9:30am 9:30 mtg-Zoom	9 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	10 10:00am KWW-craft day	11 10:30am Pastor in office	12	13
14 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	15 9:30am 9:30 mtg-Zoom 7:30pm Deacons (Zoom)	16 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH)	17	18 10:30am Pastor in office 6:30pm Stewardship (LH)	19	20
21 Easter Lily deadline 10:00am Service (sanctuary) 11:00am Soup Sale (Gathering Room)	22 9:30am 9:30 mtg-Zoom	23 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	24	25 10:30am Pastor in office 6:30pm Council (LH)	26 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up	27
28 10:00am Service (sanctuary)	29 9:30am 9:30 mtg-Zoom	30 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	31	Apr 1	2	3

100 Willing Workers

7:00 Scouts

7:30 Deacons

7:00 Scouts

7:00 Scouts



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

.....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: Tuesday 1:00-5:00
Friday 1:00-5:00