

# OUR SPIRE

Volume 37 February 2018

## Number 1

The Snowman Trinity

When you see a snowman  
Three snowballs round,  
He is reminding you  
That in God Three in One are found.

The bottom reminds us of God the Father,  
Our strong rock and foundation  
The Creator of all living things,  
People, tribes and nations.

The middle shows us God the Son  
With His arms spread open wide.  
Who died on the cross for each of us  
Our sins Jesus' blood did hide.

The head reminds us of God the Holy Spirit  
Who is our counselor and friend,  
He speaks to our hearts and minds  
Transforming us in the likeness of Him.

So when you see a snowman  
In the midst of all the wintertime fun,  
Listen carefully and he'll tell you,  
"Remember God is Three in One".

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# THANK YOU

**JEAN BONHAM**



The First Congregational Church of Harford, PA would like to express our deepest thanks to you, Jean Bonham for all the years of service to our congregation!

Jean began work on the Spire in 1993. All of the work had to be done by hand. Pictures and articles had to be copied and pasted (literally) to be included in the Spire.

Jean worked tirelessly for 24 years to keep us informed and armed with the information necessary to meet the needs of our church and community.

Thank you so much Jean!!!



# Pastor's Page

## The Christian walk: why life isn't always like the magic in the Magic Kingdom

You've heard this. You may have said this. "If God is so good, then why isn't life so good? Why is there hunger, war, and suffering? Shouldn't this 'good God' make life, well, a little more like Disney World?"

That this life isn't always like the magic in the Magic Kingdom is a top reason many don't believe—or buy into—God.

Take this further. Because we've heard there is a good God, a benevolent being, too many think we should have an express pass to a "good" life if we follow Him (her, or it).

But the Christian will tell you this isn't the case--necessarily. Jesus himself says, "Pick up your mat and walk (John 5:8, Mark 2:9)," which implies that you take your hardships with you. Hardships. As in things that are tough and don't go away; they're carried.

This month I began a month-long sermon series about God's plans. For those who are questioning (or new to) the practice of faith, the following can be a zinger: God's plans aren't always about your happiness.

What? Yikes! Really?

Christianity isn't about your health, your promotion, your success, or your freedom from pain. This faith walk is about God-worship not self-worship.

And it is a walk. A journey. A discovery at each step.

Charles Hodge, a Presbyterian theologian and the Princeton Theological Seminary principal between 1851 and 1878, points out the error of making humankind's happiness God's plan or priority.

In his 1841 book, *Way of Life*, Hodge writes, "If we make the good of the creature the ultimate object of all God's works, then we subordinate God to the creature, and endless confusion and unavoidable error are the consequences."

Let's avoid confusion. God isn't a Red Bull energy drink, aspirin, or some other fix from our pain. He responds to us; in fact, he loves us; but let this be clear: one, he's not a product on the shelf at the mini-mart or drug store, and two, this life is his plan, not ours.

Too many of us think that when we share love and genuine kindness with others than "somewhere" there should be some reward, some payoff. **On our scale of justice and mercy, the rationale is this: the Big Boss in the sky should give out bonuses. Good people (and/or the suffering people) should get good stuff.**

Since God doesn't delve out the goods the way we altruistically think he should, then we run on our truth that thinks he doesn't care, or isn't really present. For our crack at happiness, we should find Mickey in Orlando once a year because that's all the good we can get.

You have to define good. If good is your happiness, your calling the shots, and your being control, then the best rates in Disney World happen off season.

If good is joining someone in pain, if good is holding the hand or shoulder of someone who is suffering great loss and that great loss changes, even for a moment, with your quiet care and presence, then you know you are on the right path.

Take another step.

I mention God's plans. That's a really big one. Don't just wish upon a star (as the Disney song goes), pray to the Creator of those stars that you be used not for your gain but his glory.

# **Give It Up!!!**

## **Lenten Series**

**First Wednesday in Lent: February 21st: Giving Up Control: Genesis 2:15-17  
and Matthew 4:1-11**

Host Church: First Presbyterian, Hallstead  
Special Music: New Milford Choir  
Preacher: Will Hagenbuch  
Children's Message: Dennis Dillman  
Refreshments provided by Host Church: First Presbyterian, Hallstead

**Second Wednesday in Lent: February 28th: Giving Up Expectations: Genesis 12:1-4a  
and John 3:1-17**

Host Church: First UMC, New Milford  
Special Music: First Congregational-UCC, Harford  
Preacher: Dennis Dillman  
Children's Message; Jackie  
Refreshments provided by Host Church: New Milford

**Third Wednesday in Lent: March 7th: Giving Up Superiority: John 4:5-42**

Host Church: Hop Bottom UMC  
Special Music: United Methodist Community Church, Great Bend  
Preacher: Jackie Condon  
Children's Message: Jane Pykus  
Refreshments provided by Host Church: UMCC, Great Bend

**Fourth Wednesday in Lent: March 14th: Giving Up Enemies: Luke 19:37-44**

Host Church: First Universalist Church of Brooklyn  
Special Music: Hop Bottom UMC  
Preacher: Lynn Wilcox  
Children's Message: Will Hagenbuch  
Refreshments provided by Host Church: First Universalist Church of Brooklyn

**Fifth Wednesday in Lent: March 21st: Giving Up Our Lives: Ezekiel 37:1-14 and  
John 11:1-45**

Host Church: Gibson or South Gibson  
Special Music: First Presbyterian, Hallstead  
Preacher: Lucas Taylor  
Children's Message: Lynn Wilcox  
Refreshments provided by Host Church: Either Gibson or South Gibson UMC

# Worship Assistants

## Readers

February 4 Barbara Weideman  
February 11 Linda Lindsey  
February 18 Ginny Ahearn  
February 25 Nancy Burris

## Greeters

February 4th Scouts  
February 11th Ginny Ahern  
February 18th Kay Gow  
February 25

## Ushers

February 4th Scouts  
February 11th Craig/Tammy Stout  
and Family  
February 18th February 25th

## Flowers

February 4  
February 11 Kay Gow

## Address Changes

### Please Update your Directory

Kay Butler  
132 Tingley Lake Road  
Harford, PA 18823

Grace Allen  
3151 State Route 547  
Kingsley, PA 18826

Winter-403 Topper Street  
Enterlachen, FL

Mr. and Mrs. Paul/Tiffany (Butler) Debish,  
Paulie & Hannah  
5952 State Route 247  
Clifford Township  
PA 18421

Jan Winemiller  
1 Tuxedo Drive  
Beaufort  
SC 29907

Mr./Mrs. Ben/Bridget (Zick) Sherring  
and Jax  
#201  
6404 E Lake Sammamish Pkwy NE  
Redmond  
WA 98052

Mark Knox  
836 Wheeler Avenue  
Scranton  
PA 18510

Nancy Burris  
174 Dickinson Drive  
Factoryville  
PA 18419

## February birthdays and anniversaries

February 4 Dana Empet  
February 15 Kim Bridgeman  
February 18 Charlie Grimes  
Justin Moser  
Doug Higgins, Jr.  
February 23 Lynette Muller  
February 25 Jim and Gail Batzel  
February 26 Connor Mitchell  
February 27 Charline Hudson

## Correspondence

Hello,

On behalf of the Summer Lunchbox Program, we gratefully acknowledge receipt of your recent check for \$1,310. This represents the proceeds of the church's dinner at the dining hall during the Harford Fair.

With Thanksgiving less than a week away, we certainly count all of you, individually and as a group, among the many blessings of the Summer Lunch Box. You have offered support and encouragement in various forms in the past and we deeply appreciate them.

As we begin to plan for the 2018 program year, we trust you'll be continuing as an active part of this grass roots effort.

Thanks to you all and happy Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,  
Lorraine A. Stanton  
For Summer Lunch Box Program

Dear First Congregational-UCC,

My (our) nephew, your pastor Will, wrote a wonderful tribute to his father Butch, who is also our brother; so we would like to give a Spire newsletter in his memory.

Thank you for sending us Our Spire. We appreciate your news and inspirational messages. Your service to God flows through its pages and there are portions we share with our members of our church.

Have a blessed Christmas and, of course, into 2018. Peace of Christ.

Love, Harold and Jean Kretzing

\*\*\*\*\*FEBRUARY SPONSOR—Harold and Jean Kretzing\*\*\*\*\*  
In memory of Butch Hagenbuch

Dear Friends in Christ,

Alan and I are overwhelmed with the outpouring of get well wishes, letters, cards and comments left on Caring Bridge. We are deeply grateful for each and every one of you.

Alan and I open and read each card together while visiting in the hospital. He loves reading them. He is amazing. Even though his short and long term memory is compromised, he still remembers names and faces.

Alan has touched so many lives throughout his career. After reading his cards, I never knew to what extent.

It has been heartbreaking for Mark, Tina and I to see Alan so ill and not to remember events in his life, unable to crack the jokes and come back with those famous "Alan Miller" one liners.

Continue following our updates on Caring Bridge. If you would like to send Alan a card, please send to our home:

4080 Saint John's St.  
Highpoint, NC 27265.

We love all of you,  
Alan and Candy

Dear Congregation,

I wish you sincerely thank you for your prayers, thoughts, well-wishes, cards and calls during my unexpected surgery and the complications that followed. I am blessed to work with you. Your kindness is out of this world!

With appreciation,

Will

## Prayer Concerns

Rick Masters

Corinne Chichester

Patrick Simons

Rick Wilkins

Family of Mountain View teacher that was killed on 81, Patricia Pasierb.

## Home Bound

The Carey Family

Catherine Escandel

Dorothy Greene

Doris Morrison

Barbara Pease

Alice Watkins

# Missionary NEWS

The Missionary Group has collected 28 pairs of boxer shorts for St. Francis of Assisi Clothing Bank, as of January 16, 2018. The last delivery will be January 31, 2018.

The Missionary Group will be collecting items for the Disaster Relief Kits. We will be focusing primarily on the Hygiene Kits and the School Kits. The Sewing and Knitting Group has made 62 School Bags at this time that we would like to fill. Please see the lists below for the items that are needed. We will be filling the kits on February 20, 2018 at 1:00 in the Lecture Hall and would love to have anyone interested in assisting us.



## Disaster Relief

The first collection and assembling for the hygiene and clean up kits was a success. We gathered enough items to make 48 hygiene kits and 12 clean up kits. We thank everyone that contributed items and those that came to help assemble the kits.

We are continuing with this mission by collecting hygiene and clean up kit items. In addition to the original two kits, we are also collecting items for school kits. Children in areas that have experienced devastation often times have lost all of their school items and experience great difficulties when they return to school. Below you will find the list of items for each type of kits. Please stick closely to the requirements as we have been instructed to make each kit identical.

Thank you, Missionary Group First Church  
Contact: Holli Chichester 301-643-1775 or 570-851-5109

## CWS School Kit

- One pair blunt scissors removed from the package (rounded tip only)**
- Three 70count spiralbound notebooks (no loose leaf or filler paper)**
- One 30 centimeter/12 inch ruler**
- One hand held pencil sharpener removed from package**
- One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)**
- Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers removed from package**
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)**
- One 12 x 14 to 14 x 17 inch tote**

**(will be made by Knitting and Sewing Group or see Holli Chichester for the pattern)**

*All items must be packed inside the tote. Value \$15 Processing Fee \$2 per Kit*

## CWS Hygiene Kit

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15"x 28" to 16"x 32"**  
**(no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)**
- One washcloth**
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package**
- One finger nail or toe nail clipper removed from the package**
- One bath size bar of soap in the wrapper**
- One toothbrush in the package**
- Ten standard size Band-aids**

*All items need to fit inside a one-gallon plastic zipper closure bag. Do not add any extra items.*

*Value: \$15 Processing fee: \$2 per Kit*



## **CWS Emergency Cleanup Buckets**

**One five-gallon bucket with re-sealable lid**  
**Four scouring pads**  
**Seven sponges, including one large**  
**One scrub brush**  
**Eighteen reusable cleaning towels (e.g. Easy Wipes)**  
**One 50 oz. or two 25 oz. bottle(s) of liquid laundry detergent**  
**One 16-28 oz. bottle of liquid disinfectant dish soap**  
**One 12-16 oz. bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water**  
**(no spray bottles)**  
**One package of 48-50 clothespins**  
**Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.**  
**Five dust masks**  
**Two pairs non surgical latex gloves**  
**One pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather**  
**24-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags**  
**on a roll /removed from carton**  
**One 6-9 oz. bottle of non-aerosol insect repellent**

All cleaning items must be new— all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened. Place all items into the bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment. Snap the lid on tight and seal with packing tape. Value: \$75 Processing fee: \$3 per Kit

### **Missionary Group Minutes**

**12-19-17**

**Treasurer:** Bake Sale for Disaster Relief Kits \$509

Yard Sale for Nicaragua CHE Missionaries- \$2459.37

**Least Coin:** Ginny Ahearn presented Togo, "God is Love". A training program to improve the living situation in Togo by making items to sell.

**Program:** Corinne Chichester, missionary in the United Arab Emirates talked about her mission there. She teaches Second grade and has been in the UAE for 5 years. She was originally in the city of Aline for 2 ½ years but the group she is with, Wellspring, moved to Ras Al Khaimah to start a new school.

The Gospel is spread through relationships between the staff and those they meet, students, parents, neighbors and non-Christian teaching aides. Those that visit the school feel the difference, that is the presence of God. They call it a "Place of Light".

All classes are taught in English but very few of the students are native English speakers. There are students from the UAE, Egypt, Philippines, Korea, Africa and many other places. Teachers dress modestly so as not to offend.

## Game On

Up-Coming Game-On Dates:

Friday, January 26th 6-8 pm  
Friday, February 9th 6-8 pm  
Friday, February 23rd 6-8 pm



### Harford First Congregational Deacon Minutes January 8th, 2018

- Shirley and David suggested a prayer book be left somewhere in the church where anyone can write a prayer request at any time.

-Shirley brought up the discussion of the Poinsettia Tree.. Should it stay?

Next meeting is February 12@ 7 pm in the Pastor's Office.

### Christian Education Minutes

Game -On January 12th has a theme of snowmen. Bonnie has rocks left over from the fair and we will use them to paint snowmen on for the craft. Judy rocks. A poem using a snowman to illustrate the Holy Trinity will be read during the children's sermon.

A pageant for Lent and Easter was brought up with a song about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey was talked about.

The upcoming pancake dinner on January 27th from 4:30-6:30 was also discussed.

A youth group retreat entitled Thaw Youth Group Weekend will be held in Susquehanna on March 2nd -4th or 9th-11th. The program cost \$106/per person. It requires a leader and participants from each group who attend. The registration deadline for this is February 25th.

Postcards for birthdays were discussed and Kandy is going to make some up with block letters for the children to color and then they will be sent to those celebrating their special day.

The next meeting is February 6th at 6:15 in the pastor's office.

## Stewardship: January 25, 2018

Stewardship began the new calendar year with a vibrant meeting supported by a “full house” of 11 members where we began work on the vision, plans, and dreams for our church community.

Pastor Will had given us the challenge of developing a new MISSION STATEMENT for the church: one that would be short, strong, and to the point. Two (2) were drafted over the course of the meeting, and these will be presented to the various committees during the month of February in order to gain feed-back on the choices.

Joe Kulysehie reported that the new website should be ready for “viewing” by Saturday at the latest. Will has requested that we review the changes and send our comments to him as a dry-run of what we think: [firstchurchharford.com](http://firstchurchharford.com). Joe also shared that “on-line giving” is just about ready to be used. The format will start simple to include the categories currently on the pledge envelopes, noting that changes can be made going forward as the need arises. On Sunday, February 11, Joe will give a short tutorial On-Line Giving during the regular service.

We welcome Julie Gardner as the new Treasurer and continue to thank Connie Breese for her support throughout the transition period. January was a “slim” month giving-wise (bitter cold, vacationers, and illness) , but with a balance from 2017 as support, we will make it through.

Next month we will be addressing more with social networking, forward movement with our strategic plan, and developing specific deadlines for various tasks during the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Kinney

Secretary



**Harford Volunteer Fire Company Presents:**

# **CHICKEN BBQ**



**February 18, 2018**

**Menu: BBQ Chicken, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, Roll and Dessert - \$10**

**North Harford Willing Workers -Bake Sale Too!!!!**



**BAKE SALE**

Contact Connie Breese for special requests: 570-434-2913

**2018 LILY ORDER FORM**

Please order: \_\_\_\_\_ lily plants at \$7.00 = \$\_\_\_\_\_ (total price)

Given By: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**"DEADLINE March 18, 2018"**

In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mail order and payment to:

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

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**2018 LILY ORDER FORM**

Please order: \_\_\_\_\_ lily plants at \$7.00== \$\_\_\_\_\_ (total price)

Given By: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**"DEADLINE March 18, 2018"**

In Loving Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Mail order and payment to:

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

Non-Profit Organization

US Postage Paid

PERMIT—#20

Montrose, PA 18801



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United Church of Christ  
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PO Box217  
Harford, PA 18823  
Tel.570-434-2260  
Email: firstch@nep.net  
Web URL: <http://www2nep.net>

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

Isaiah 9:2

*Join Us Each Sunday!!*

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

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