



**Our Spire
Volume 40
November
2020**

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

Pastor's Page:



Here we are now: peaceful or panicked

A level-headed friend from college recently texted me in fear for our nation. I asked her to share what event or events are pushing her into a panic. Within a minute—a *single minute*—she shared a short yet significant list of what truly frightens her about the state of the United States these days.

She isn't alone. While I didn't do an extensive, qualitative poll, I did wonder who else holds concerns that have escalated to the point of unhealthy signs of stress and fear. I found plenty.

The temperature and polarity here in America has certainly been affected by social media, one could argue, and I agree. However, social media and slanted (or even scandalous-based) news agencies aside, many, if not all of us, have seen on the rise what I will call a progressive undermining of the values, morals, and ideals in this nation that did not exist to this extent a decade ago.

We have had shock wave traumas, those instances in our history where a national tragedy sends so many into an emotional tailspin. This is different. This is bigger, deeper, and uglier. Too many in our nation are too angry, divisive, unkind, or even at times blatantly rude.

In response, I am reminded of the last sermon I gave before my October vacation. I spoke on Esther. Specifically, I framed a significant piece of that message on what Mordecai shares to his cousin, the Queen. During her down on the ground time of trial and emotional trauma, he asks, "Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for such a time as this (4:14b)?"

If we are going to both celebrate and rest in the fact that God is in fact God and controls everything, then it's a logical extension of this theological premise to assert that God being God has put you on this planet in this nation at this time. It is unquestionable that Esther had a purpose in a specific time. It's equally unquestionable that Esther was also under great stress and strain during what would be the successful plan to spare not only her life but the lives of her people. Easy for Esther? Ha. Not at all. Easy for us?

Should it be?

I get that you want Easy Street. I do, too. I want a course of action before me that, on a bad day, may be *mildly* challenging. I certainly don't want to experience ongoing, adverse conditions such as a nation that is becoming more and more unchristian.

This returns to the premise I mentioned that Sunday. There is an unspoken notion in our faith in Christ that because of Him, or, more to the point, because of our following of Him, our lives should be easier. There shouldn't be hard stuff! We got Jesus!

But there are hard things, and, just like Esther, I believe God has called us, specifically *us*, to this day and age. Think of the retired grandparent who wants the Soft Life only to experience the Golden Years are not gold at all. Turbulence? Mayhem? Anxiety? Who needs this?

We may not need or want this, but consider the Apostle Paul who, as we study and then reflect upon the compilation of his New Testament works, never had it easy. His walk with his Jesus didn't bring resort-like living; Paul truly had difficult seasons as a senior Christian. We cannot expect less. What we can expect, however, is what Paul experienced, which was peace within panic-stricken moments. The world vehemently rejected the message of Christ then as the world adamantly rejects the message of Christ now. Through this, Paul preached and wrote not from a place of gentle comfort and posh, problem-free communities; he wrote to pressed and stressed Christians then and today who daily face a smorgasbord of gut-turning headlines.

Pastor's Page Continued:

You ARE born for a time and place such as this. Esther didn't welcome her angst. You shouldn't, either. Like her, you shouldn't be passive during problematic times. The statement, "Well, God's got this," is indeed true. God does have this. But Esther didn't sit back and give it all to God to let God sort her hot mess out. She acted. We must, too.

While I do not remember the details now, I recall the grief-burning mother who had just lost her teenage son to a mass shooting at his high school. She said, "I don't want your prayers." She meant that. Specifically, she meant she did not want passivity. Prayers are not passive. When we Christians are passive, however, then panic is far more common than peace.

Go ahead and pray, or continue to pray. But pray God uses you for times such as these not with your eyes closed and your hands folded, but in action on the frontline, which is now in your backyard.

Stewardship 2020: turns out that you do love to tell (and hear!) the story

Good news travels! As your pastor, I continue to receive affirmations in regard to the testimonials that have been posted to our church website and our church Facebook page. These affirmations are not great in number. Such things never really are, given the nature of how people respond. But it's never been about the number, and that is what your Stewardship team brings to us during this season. Yes, we have financial obligations to the ongoing ministries this church provides beyond its walls, but it's always been about Christ first.

Craig Stout, our 2020 Stewardship captain, has said, "It's about our relationship with Christ that matters. How we live this and how we share this is what matters."

And it does matter. Specifically, our stories matter. Yes, I have shared from the pulpit that our stories of Christ may or may not be easy to share—but they need to be shared! Our stories truly are one of our greatest gifts. They are also our legacy. Our stories of our faith are what we leave behind; they let the world know who we are and whose we are. These stories, these testimonials, inspire us. These one- to two-minute videos direct us, align us, and enable us to find and affirm our own stories. They are great to hear. As I have heard from you, the congregation, these recorded stories bring smiles, nods, appreciation and a warmhearted connectedness here in Harford and in our online community that the COVID virus and all its distancing cannot diminish.

The videos I have filmed of some of you are similar in that the one being recorded is never quite comfortable with standing in front of my cell phone. They are not nervous, per se, but they know that what they want to say to us is so important. Their faith story is that vital. Their recounting a moment or two in or around the church matters. And honestly, it only takes that one moment of starting to film and then the Holy Spirit takes over. Once they start their story, the words flow.

Think about a loved one who has shaped your faith because they told you their story or stories of God in their life.

Wouldn't you love to replay that story?

Hear it again?

See it again?

The answers to these questions is a resounding yes because we find ourselves in the stories of faith that we hear. These first-person narratives become beacons in the night. Much like the stories in the Bible, which is the light onto our path, we relate to what we hear, and we love to hear from each other. Isn't it time to share your story, as comfortable or as uncomfortable as it may be?

I imagine the answer to that question is also a resounding yes.

One of the conversations I hear repeatedly is summed up this way. "There are so many stories about my life with Jesus that I just can't choose one."

So don't! There is no limit on what you can share or how often you wish to share your stories (plural). I have three that will be posted. Each one speaks to a time I heard God speak to me.

Maybe you have not all seen what has been posted. Please visit our website if you have not because I imagine you'll experience what I did when I watched each testimonial. I felt joy. I felt warmth. I felt hope, mercy and grace. I felt that in some way each story I heard connected me further to my own stories of Jesus Christ, Savior of the world.

Here's how to make your own video if you don't have the tech skills to do it on your own and post it. Just contact me or Craig (570-396-7080). We will be glad to film you and your story.

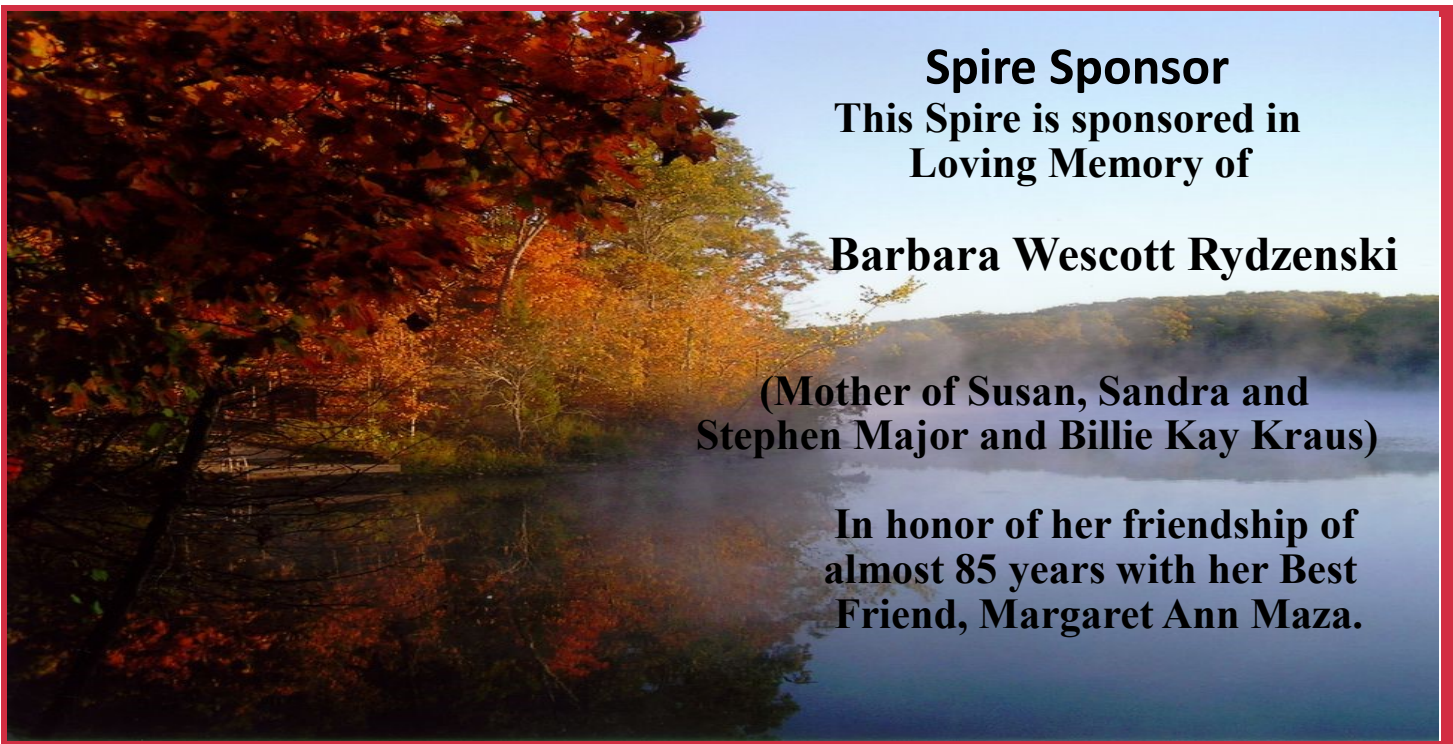
FYI: This is Craig's latest and perhaps greatest ministry projects. His whole heart and soul are in this, and I am not alone in sharing that I see a great healing within him because of this opportunity God has inspired him to do and gift us all.

If you love to hear the stories, please help our church and our Stewardship Committee by creating your own story. We will post it for you.

Please give a gift that lasts long into the future. Speak of your time or times with God.

In Christ's name I send this.

Will



Spire Sponsor
This Spire is sponsored in
Loving Memory of

Barbara Wescott Rydzenski

(Mother of Susan, Sandra and
Stephen Major and Billie Kay Kraus)

In honor of her friendship of
almost 85 years with her Best
Friend, Margaret Ann Maza.

2020 Stewardship Campaign... This year it is a little different...

This year's Stewardship Campaign is taking on a little different look. October 4th Worship was held outdoors under a tent with the country gospel group True Heart leading us in Worship. We celebrated worldwide communion that day and kicked off our fall campaign with the theme "I Love to Tell the Story". It was a very moving experience and a fitting start to our program. You may ask "What is telling the story all about?" Actually it is quite simple. We have experienced "God" moments in our lives or times when the Holy Spirit clearly intervened. We may have shared this with family, but are we willing to go the next step and share it with our congregation? Do we have it in us to "Tell the Story"?

Many things have changed over the years. As I stood in the vestibule recording the introduction to the fall campaign, I looked up at the ropes coming down from the bell and thought even the bell was changed. The original one from our church is in the front yard and the bell from the Methodist Church that used to stand across the street is in our bell tower. Imagine the discussion that was had about that.

More recent changes have been more of an online presence since Covid 19 has affected all of our lives. We were blessed to be ahead of the curve by a couple years as other churches were scrambling to get online. We were already established.

But one thing has not changed over all these years. And that is the reason that someone comes to church. The main reason that someone comes to church isn't the great baked goods from the Willing Workers (haha), but it is the chance to have that personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. And how important do you think you would be to a person that is seeking that relationship if you were to share a story of your own. Yes, it may be out of your comfort zone, at least you might think it is, but the rewards are great. The story could be very powerful. You could end up changing someone's path or life!

Please take the time to pray about this story telling project. Yes, pledges are important and time and talent sheets are equally important. But your relationship and the congregation's relationship with the Holy Spirit are first and foremost the most important steps in our faith. All the rest will come with prayer and leadership from the Holy Spirit.

Be sure to visit our Facebook page or website and see these powerful and heartfelt testimonies from our congregants. If you are ready to share with us, speak to Pastor Will or any of the Stewardship Committee so we can get your story out there. Speaking up may seem uncomfortable at first, but think of that person that just needs to hear it. They need to know of that relationship.

As Paul said in Colossians 4:3 "Pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ"

May God Bless Your Journey,

Craig Stout, Stewardship

Facebook: Harford First Congregational Church-UCC

Website: www.firstchurchharford.com

Faith Stories

We begin our Fall Stewardship campaign with our stories of faith and those times where we just knew that the Holy Spirit had to be involved. We are excited to start out this week with three stories straight from the hearts of Kay, Nancy, and Craig.



Early in the week Kay told her story of being in the Air Force and stationed in Germany. Shortly after prayer time at a Baptist church, Kay and her son were traveling in a car across a bridge. Along side of the bridge were the electric train tracks. Somehow Kay lost control of the car and ended up sliding from one side of the road to the other ending up in the median. What was a miracle was that there were no other cars coming from either direction, or the accident could have been much worse. Kay shared in her video that she knows that the Lord was with them that day or she and her son would not be here to tell the story.

The second story midweek was from Nancy Burris. Nancy had lost her faith after the unexpected loss of several family members. She ended up coming to the church for a funeral service a couple years later. As she sat through the funeral service, she was overcome with such strong emotions, she knew this feeling could only be explained as the Holy Spirit coming to her, telling her that she needed to return to her faith and that the Lord was with her the whole time even when she turned away. Walking through the cemetery for the burial service, she approached Pastor Will and said she wanted to come back to church and she did!



The third came from Craig telling his story of being in the kitchen with Tammy early on in his illness and Tammy said we need bread and milk today. Craig said it was hard to believe we needed bread and milk because Craig worked in a grocery store..we always had bread and milk. Not two minutes later, there was a knock on the door and there stood Holli with two gallons of milk and four loaves of bread, donated by the summer lunch box program along with other food items. After Holli left, Craig and Tammy stood in the kitchen looking at each other in amazement, knowing that the Holy Spirit had just stepped in to help out right when they needed it.

In the fourth story this week Gail tells the story of her and her Mom traveling to a friend's house because something told Gail to stop at the house. She had no intention to go to Harriet's that day but she was given a nudge that she couldn't ignore. When they arrived at Harriet's, Gail knew something was wrong. There were no tracks in the snow, nothing was disrupted, this seemed odd to Gail that there were no signs of recent activity. She called 911 to see if a welfare check could be done on Harriet. Unfortunately, when the police arrived, they found that Harriet had passed a couple days before. Gail concludes that the Holy Spirit lead her to Harriet's that day and if she didn't listen to that nudge, there is no telling how long it might have been until Harriet was found.



Our fifth story this week was from Melissa. Melissa tells her story about how she and Evan (her son) had previously made plans for him to attend culinary school and college. Evan came to his mom later and said " Mom, I'm going in the Army. God has spoken to me and he continues to send all of these people into my life. This is what I'm supposed to do now." For Melissa, as a Mom, this news was a bit of a shock and not easy to hear, but she trusted that all was going to be okay. Evan is now in the Army and doing very well along with his comrades! She prays constantly for their well-being and safety and trusts that God has a plan and Evan is right where he is supposed to be.



Our sixth story this week was shared by Pastor Will. It was November of 1999 when his father's cousin Emily came to him and shared that his dad had suddenly passed away while doing the first day of harvesting Christmas Trees. Will's first instinct was to get to his mom but God spoke to him, and said "Go see your Dad". When Will arrived on the scene, life support attempts had ceased and his father was at peace. Will said "This may sound weird, but it was beautiful because my Dad was at peace". A couple of days later while attending his dad's funeral at the church is when God spoke to him once again and Will heard that Boston University School of Theology was in his future.

Our Seventh story was shared by Lisa. She had grown up in the church. She learned to give thanks to God for all her blessings and the good things that she had. As she grew, she realized that she needed to thank God for her trials too. Psalm 118 verse "In my distress I prayed to the Lord and the Lord answered me." She says that we don't always have happiness, sometimes we have pain and suffering and sometimes it can be really terrible. However, if we understand God's presence in our lives, it can be so much easier to bear our trials. Pray for help and encouragement. Psalm 28 verse 7 "The Lord is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy."



The eighth story is shared by Tammy. She experienced a God moment while driving to Hershey Medical Center with Craig for a follow-up appointment. She had been feeling very stressed and apprehensive about what news they would receive. As they were driving along she was listening to Christian music and praying. She happened to glance outside her car window and saw a white dove flying with them. She looked at Craig and he saw it too. She felt that it was a sign from God that He was with them all the way and that they weren't alone. Although the report from the doctor wasn't what they had hoped deep down (that the tumor was miraculously gone), it was what they had prayed for (that the chemo would be working and the tumor was shrinking), She felt that the dove was just a reminder to her that this life isn't by her plan or at her pace but at God's. He will be with them through this trial and all to come.

Eight stories. Eight completely different circumstances. One constant. The holy spirit is always there for us, even when we aren't ready for it. The grace that has been shared in these stories is undeniable. All we need to do is ask for God's help, look for His guidance, and most of all, give it all up to Him. So many times we say "I'm giving this all to you God". But, do we really? Do we truly give it ALL to God or just the pieces we want to give? Give it ALL to God! Give your fears, your problems, and foremost ALL the glory that you can possibly give, give it to God!

And remember to pay attention to those nudges. They can be life-changing as these stories show! We thank those who have shared their stories with us this week. We look forward to hearing new stories next week! See the stories here: <https://firstchurchharford.com/about/about-our-church-organization/stewardship/tell-your-story-2020> and our FaceBook page. If you would like to share your testimony after worship today Tammy will be available to record your story. Please step up and step out of that comfort zone and tell your story this week!





THE CHURCH AT IT'S BEST

THE CHURCH AT IT'S BEST IS THE CHURCH THAT IS BLEST
WITH A PEOPLE OF HIGH DESIRE
WITH A MINISTER TRUE WHO CAN CARRY THROUGH
IT'S PROGRAMME WITH ZEST AND FIRE.
IT MUST BE CARE FOR THE SAD, MAKE THEIR HEARTS GLAD
WITH A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND CHEER.
AND IT'S MEMBERS MUST STRIVE FOR A HEART THAT'S ALIVE
WITH A FAITH AND A PURPOSE SINCERE.
THE CHURCH AT IT'S BEST MUST ENCOMPASS THE REST
OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE IT'S "SEE"
IT MUST REACH HIGH OR LOW IF IT ONWARD WOULD GO
TO A GLORIOUS VICTORY.
THERE ARE THOUSANDS AT HAND IN THE BEAUTIFUL LAND
WHO NEED A HELPING HAND
AND MILLIONS WHO ARE STARVING AND POOR
WHO LIVE IN A FOREIGN LAND.
THE CHURCH AT IT'S BEST. IT'S A WONDERFUL TEST
TO SHOW HOW THIS WORLD CAN BE FREE
ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE
THAT'S THE QUESTION FOR YOU AND ME....

Author Unknown



*Harford First Congregational
Church-UCC*

2021

Commitment Card

“Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.”

Psalm 119:105

In the next calendar year the church will
receive a contribution of
\$ _____ per
(Week) (Month) (Year)
(Please circle one)

Please apply the pledge above as follows:

- \$ _____ General budget
- \$ _____ for Our Churches Wider Mission
(OCWM)
- \$ _____ for Capital Fund (Property
Improvement)
- \$ _____ Building Fund
- \$ _____ Church Cupboard
- \$ _____ Youth/Community Outreach
- \$ _____ Other _____
- \$ _____ Other _____
- \$ _____ Other _____

Name(s) _____
Signature _____
Date _____

***Return this side to the financial secretary, or
mail to the office,
or deposit in the collection plate***

Thank you very much.

Do you desire a box of pledge envelopes for
each Sunday?-Yes/No



*Harford First Congregational
Church-UCC*

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- \$ _____ Other _____
- \$ _____ Other _____
- \$ _____ Other _____

Name(s) _____
Signature _____
Date _____

***Please detach and retain this copy for your
records***

2021-Time and Talents

Altar Flowers-provide _____
Attic Treasures help _____
Bell Choir _____
Bible Study _____
Candle lighting _____
Choir singing _____
Church Cupboard help _____
Church up-keep _____
Cocoa donate _____
Coffee Hour help & food _____
Crafting group _____
Disaster kit items _____
Drive folks _____
Fair Dinner-help _____
Food-covered dish meals _____
Funeral Dinners/help or food _____
Golf Tournament help _____
Greeter at double doors _____
Log Cabin help _____
Memorial Garden-help _____
Missionary Group _____
Monday 9:30AM mtg-attend _____
Music _____
Solo, choir, bells (circle) _____
Nursery sitting _____
Peanut butter- donate _____
Pick up folks for church _____
Read on Sundays _____
Serve on a committee _____
Soup/cookie ministry _____
Sponsor Spire _____
Sunday school helper _____
Ugly Quilts _____
Usher _____
Visit shut-ins _____
Weinberg Distribution -help _____
Willing Workers _____
Yard clean-up help _____
Youth/Community outreach-donation _____
Youth/Community outreach-help _____
Other _____

Name _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

2021-Time and Talents

Altar Flowers-provide _____
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Youth/Community outreach-help _____
Other _____

Name _____
Telephone _____
Email _____

Council Minutes

Financial:	2019		2020	
	September		September	YTD
	Income \$6,686.51		Income \$7,291.70	Income \$100,718.36
	Expense \$10,096.45		Expense \$10,834.89	Expense \$90,699.36
	Total -\$3,409.94		Total -\$3,543.19	Total \$10,049.00

CE Minutes: On November 1st we planned to start face-to-face Sunday School. The children will sit in church until the children's sermon and then go downstairs for Sunday School. The teachers will be Bonnie, Kay, and perhaps Charlene. Payton will help Miss Kay with her class. She will lead the singing and do crafts. Postponed due to school closing...will relook at it in a month.

We will be seeking more helpers to aid with Sunday School as well as the nursery. Holli will be in the nursery and will need help. If anyone volunteers and hasn't had a background check they will need one. Masks will be required to be worn. We also discussed perhaps having the children themselves be guest speakers and talk about God and Jesus.

Church Cupboard: serving 1 family

Cradle Roll: 5 families received letters and Christian Books

Deacon Minutes: November 29, 2020 at 6:00pm will be the tree lighting. Deacons are co-sponsoring this event with the Stewardship committee. The theme this year is "Tree of Hope." Holli is looking for ornaments that open that people can put what they hope for on paper and put it in the ornament. This event will be entirely outside including using the keyboard to sing Christmas Carols and candle lighting. It was suggested that we use battery operated candles due to wind. Kay will price them out. These candles will be easier to clean due to COVID-19 and can then used for Christmas Eve.

We discussed the Christmas Eve service. It has been suggested that we have more than one service due to COVID-19. Services would be held at 6:00, 9:00, and 11:00pm. Will is willing to do two out of the three services with someone else picking up the 11:00pm service. A suggestion was made that we poll the congregation to see if they are planning on coming to a Christmas Eve Service and if so what time. This way we can be prepared and spread out due to COVID-19. Katherine will create a survey to be sent out via email and tallied online before we make our decision.

Next meeting will be November 8, 2020 via Zoom.

Historian: Average 29/ service

Missionary Minutes: \$60 paid out to CWU Least Coin and \$75 paid to to Daily Bread

Japan Mission: Christmas card to two churches in Japan. Karen will draft a letter. We plan to take a group picture next meeting and include pictures from the Tree Lighting in November.

Operation Christmas Child: Currently 46 boxes are taken. We will pay the \$9 processing fee if the boxes don't come in with this money. It costs approximately \$22 to fill a box.

Christmas Tags: We will take a minimum of one child during the Christmas Tag distribution and see how many are left.

Soup Ministry: encouraging people to take the soup in the freezer to those shut in or sick.

Next Meeting: November 17, 2020

Nominating: Still need to fill one Stewardship position.

Pastor's Report: Not Given

Pastor Relations: No Meeting

Trustee Meeting Minutes:

Old Business: Rich Masters sourced new lamp posts for the front of the church. The lamp posts are \$695 each which does not include the lamp. Trustees will continue to look for other options.

Trustees will seek a quote for Roller Compacted Concrete to replace the current blacktop driveway and parking area as an alternative to the recent quote for asphalt from Pro-Seal.

New Business: Trustees will check with Tanner Stout to see if he is willing to shovel the snow again this winter. Harry Gardner is willing to help. Brandon Bennett will plow snow again this year.

Willing Worker Big Group Meeting:

Old Business: Kandi sent a letter to the fair board prior to their September meeting about our space in a new building but has not received a response. It is possible that the sizes that the fair thought spots in the building would be were different once the building was built. Kandi will talk to Jason to see if the letter was presented at their meeting. She will also give him another copy of the letter. When Ivie called from our meeting on March 3, we were told that the spots were 12x12 so two would be 12x24..

The cancer benefit netted just under \$22,000. Willing Workers paid for the lunch. Stepniak's donated pork although some was purchased from another vendor. Beans and cole slaw were also donated.

A catalog for Rada knives was placed in the office. The idea being that knives we had in stock could be sold but people ordered other products from the catalog. Kandi will send in the order and we will make a small profit on them. The next Spire will contain a list of Rada stock that we currently have and people will have an opportunity to purchase from that list. There will be a cut off date for orders. There will not be a knife sale at the roast beef dinner.

NEW BUSINESS: There was a long discussion of the roast beef dinner. Ivie made tickets and posters. Dinner will be November 21 from 3 – 5:30. Take out only. All tickets presale. It will be drive through with no access to the church. Tickets to be distributed to each group. Ticket sales should be finished by Nov 13 with totals going to Kay of adult and child tickets purchased. Kay to be in charge but she will confer with JoAnn about what to order and past orders. Holli to inventory and obtain containers. There is no need for beverages or silverware. We have new bags to put take out dinners in. We need 38 ten inch apple pies. Ellen found 30 new pie tins in the cupboard that will be distributed. Each group is asked to supply 13 pies. There will be a roast beef dinner meeting on November 4 at 1:00PM.

GROUP REPORTS: All groups had some part in helping with the cancer benefit.

Harford-3present, North Harford-3 present (Will meet next week), Kingsley-4 present (Will meet next week)

The next regular Big Group meeting will be Wednesday, February 3, 2020 at 1:00PM in the Lecture Hall. Harford is hostess.

Old Business: Reviewed Building Use Form,
Reviewed Budget Requirements

Next Council Meeting: December 3, 2020 at 6:30

Donations!!

Our Congregation is so generous. When the call goes out for peanut butter, jelly, Christmas boxes, hot chocolate, Interfaith gifts, women's resource center, clothing collections, or whatever else is needed, donations appear in great quantities. Sometimes things appear with no indication of what they are for. If you leave a donation, please indicate what it is for so it gets to the right place. Just write it on the bag.

No more grocery bags are needed at this time. If you have extras, please take them back to the recycling container at the store.

Thank you!

Notice: Please send all material for December/January to be included in the Spire to:

Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of November 2020!

IMPORTANT NOTICE



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.

Spire Sponsor

**In memory of
Richard and Eloise Masters
-Rich and Shirley Masters-**

Council Minutes

September 2020

Pastor's Report:

I shared from the pulpit upon my return from a two-week vacation that this was the first time in over three years that I could really just stop and reset during a vacation. In the past, I used my vacation time to complete academic work in the doctoral program. I returned to the pulpit bright-eyed, bushy tailed, and so happy to be back. Time away offers great perspectives and I see again who and how this congregation is. We are hardworking, frugal, tenacious, adaptable, friendly, and willing to take risks in the name of God and our community. In addition to the fire department and EMTs that are so faithful to all of us in service, I believe we are aware that we really are the hub of the community. There is a rightful sense of ownership to this as well as a responsibility we do not take lightly. We are a city on a hill (Matthew 5:14), and this hill, and all the people around it, need to know of and be in community with the God who gathers us and creates for us opportunities of care.

Speaking of care, it truly is tremendous that the Stout benefit on September 19th raised not only an incredible amount of financial gifts, but also this benefit raised the awareness that this church has and will continue to be viable for any in need.

When it comes to the Stouts, Craig has been deep in thought over this year's Stewardship Campaign for a long time. This campaign is another original. While what I am about to mention is fine, we are not using a plug-it-in pre-fab model from our conference, denomination, or any other denomination. Craig and I have worked closely on this, are aware of its appropriate challenges and completely look forward to its rewards, which are the testimonies and the personal, lived-in stories we will hear from many of you. We do love to tell the story, which is our theme. Some of us, and here comes the appropriate challenge, need to be reminded of or encouraged by this. In time, and with others modeling a faith safe to share out there, we truly are witnessing Jesus in our lives. This greatest gift, the steadfast connection with Christ, is truly pivotal as we continue to move beyond the walls of the church to the community I have already spoken of here.

A great deal of thought, energy and prayer have gone into the upcoming worship under the tent event on World Wide Communion Sunday, October 4th. This Sunday promises to be filled with Spirit!

I continue to think on what it means to be a community during these ever-stretching days with the virus. Is worship really one-on-one? How much God time is influenced by others? Is there God, and is there godly community? If so, are they at all the same? As we supported the Stouts recently, how are we supporting each other through the trials life brings to each of us? Many have cancer. Many have other needs as well. How does the continually changing platform called "church" enable us to not only connect, but also love not in a vague sense, but in real, tangible ways? These questions are answered each time we raise them in prayer because God does not idly listen to our requests as if they are just that, requests. We seek answers. We seek ways to find and bring God's love out in the world around us.

Prayer works. I ask that you pause right now and pray for someone you know who needs that God Connection now.

Speaking to prayer, I am always blessed by the number of visits I am able to do each month. These connections inspire and allow Jesus to walk in beside us and speak his truth. Thank you all for your time.

Again, it is great to be back after some rest. As the Holy Spirit continues to lead us, I pray we have the bold faith to follow the bold plans God has for this church on a hill. Amen.

Obituary of Scott D. Klenk

Scott D. Klenk, 64, of Tingley Lake, PA, passed away peacefully at home on Thursday, October 8, 2020. Born on November 13, 1955, in Binghamton, NY, he was the son of the late Robert W. and Miriam [Seager] Klenk. Scott's greatest loves in life were his children, closely followed by Tingley Lake, Elk Mountain, and volunteering. He was a ski patroller at Elk Mountain for 25 years. He volunteered for the Boys and Girls Club, the United Way, and the American Red Cross in Scranton, PA, where he served as President of the Board of Directors. In 2018, the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York honored him with the Philly Drake Award, which is presented to a member who has made significant contributions through their commitment and dedication to the community. Scott lived his life to the fullest. He enjoyed skiing, playing golf, volleyball, and softball, trips to Aruba, and coaching soccer teams, especially the teams his kids played for. He was an avid Boston Red Sox and Penn State football fan. He loved throwing BBQs at the lake, where he would without fail order too many clams. Scott was a magnet for joy and fun, and was an anchor in his community. His sentiment towards life is reflected in the people that surrounded him. He was beloved by his friends and family. Scott served as Vice President of HR at ICS Learning Systems and Community Medical Center (now Geisinger Community Medical Center) in Scranton, PA. He then moved on to spend 14 years as the Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Capital District Physicians Health Plan, Inc. in Albany, NY, before retiring in 2019. Survivors include daughters, Nicole Klenk [Will Naito] of Portland, OR, and Emilie Barrar (Tim) of Philadelphia, PA, and a son, Jonathan Klenk of St. Petersburg, FL; a sister, Susan Rikkola of Weehawken, NJ, and brothers and sisters-in-law, Robert Klenk, Jr. (Rita) of Newton Square, PA, and Jeffrey Klenk (Mei Hong) of Niskayuna, NY.

Services: Private. Instead of flowers: Memorial contributions may be made to the Boys and Girls Club of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 609 Ash Street, Scranton, PA 18510 or the Northeastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Red Cross, 256 N Sherman Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Dear Congregation,

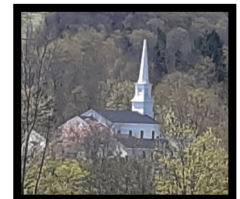
Attention! The worship service will be livestreamed live at 10:00 am each Sunday.

We have been eager to worship together again. Our council met to discuss how we can safely begin this process. We are now able to meet 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. We will enter and exit through the glass double doors.

For those who feel it is best to stay at home and continue online worship, which, at the moment, seems to be the majority of us, 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.



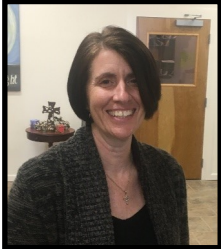
Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church

Normally the 4th Friday of each month

but the distribution in November is changed due to Thanksgiving.

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



Next distribution November 20, 2020
3:30-5:30



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.

Correspondence

I hope all is well in Harford. Miss All of you!

Praying for the church and the members.

Love,

Cathy Morrison Anderson



Christmas Gift Time

RADA Cutlery

If anyone is interested in purchasing Rada Cutlery for themselves or for Christmas Gifts, the following pages have a Christmas Gift Order Sheet. The office is open on Tuesdays and Fridays to drop off your order sheet with payment or mail order form and payment to:

Harford First Congregational Church –UCC
5016 Creek Road
PO Box 217
Harford, PA 18823



Due by December 1, 2020

Rada Knife Order Form 2020-21

Name _____ Date _____

Phone # _____ Order Total _____

Item # I	Item Name	Order	Price	Total
R100 W200	Granny Paring		4.75	
R101 W201	Regular Paring Black handle		4.75	
R102 W202	Peeling Paring Black handle		4.75	
R103 W203	Heavy Duty Paring Black handle		4.75	
R104 W204	Utility/Steak Black Handle		5.25	
R105 W205	Serrated Steak Black Handle		5.25	
R106	Stubby Butcher		7.25	
R107	Slicer		7.50	
R108	Carve/ Boner		7.25	
R109	Old Fashioned Butcher		14.25	
110	Carving Fork		6.50	
111	Ham Slicer		9.25	
112	10" Bread Knife		9.25	
R113	Super Spreader		5.75	
R114	Spatula		6.75	
R117	Handi-Stir		5.00	
R118	Bagel Knife		6.25	
R119	Sharpener		5.75	
R120	Serrated Pie Server		7.00	

R121	Pizza Cutter		10.50	
R122	Granny Fork		5.25	
R123 X	Cook Spoon(no holes)		9.50	
R124 X	Cook Spoon(w/ holes)		9.50	
R126	Tomato Slicer		5.50	
R127 W227	Super Parer Black Handle		6.50	
R128	Turnover		8.00	
R129	Chef's Dicer		12.00	
R130	Grapefruit Knife		5.25	
R131	French Chef's Knife		\$17.50	
R132 W232	Vegetable Peeler		6.50	
R133	Mini Server		6.00	
R134 W234	Cook's Knife		8.50	
R135	Party Spreader		4.75	
R136	6" Bread Knife		7.50	
R137	Ice Cream Scoop		11.50	
R138	Serrated Slicer		7.75	
R139	Cheese Slicer		7.50	
R140	Cook's Utility		6.00	
R141	Deluxe Veg. Peeler		7.25	
R142 W242	Serrated Regular Paring		4.75	
W980	Non scratch spoon...no holes		8.50	
W981	Non scratch spoon...w/holes		8.50	
W982	Non scratch spatula		8.50	
W983	Non scratch soup ladle		8.50	
	Micro Cloth		5.00	

Home Bound

The Carey Family

Barbara Pease

Dorothy Greene

Joan Benson



Prayer Concerns

- We pray for lives to be preserved—saved—because we, Your people witness to You, we, Your children, speak of you through our hearts and in our actions
- 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
- We pray for Cathi Ferger's niece Stacy with stage 3 breast cancer
- Craig Stout and Family
- Ellen Holdredge's Daughter –in-law and all teachers
- 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
- Chris Tracy
- David and Brandy
- Shannon N. and her family
- Those with Alzheimer's and their families
- Ivie Simons on her journey with cancer
- JoAnn Titus
- Gary and Wendy Phillips
- the Carey family

- Ray Frederick
- John Zimmerman
- Shani Vietri
- those experiencing financial pressures
- Susan Conklin on the recent loss of her mother
- Uncle Manny
- Barb for prayers for her neighbor
- those fighting addiction
- Joan Benson & Lois Gibson and all those in nursing homes along with their families
- Fred Williams
- Rock Estabrook
- Barbie Parsons and her family
- House Hunting for Donna and John Lesniak
- upcoming weddings
- Will's five foster kids
- Evan Clarkson and all those faithfully serving in the military
- MaryJane Genneken
- Marlene Dean
- Sandy Zupanovich
- Future of the Supreme Court
- Family of Nancy Hunter
- SNMBC AWANA
- Barb's neighbor (loss of mother)



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



Directory Update



SSGT Schulte, Robert*, Monica & Greta Wanda Schmidt
6057 Los Siglos Drive PO Box 68173
El Paso Virginia Beach
TX 79912-7512 VA 23471-8173

Mari Catania Mr./Mrs. Robert*/Dorothy* Simons
PO Box 21 103 Harford Village Apartments
Gouldsboro School Street
PA 18424-0021 Harford
PA 18823

Mr./Mrs. Joseph/Mallory* Phelan Mrs. Margaret Ann Maza
11457 S.W 139th PL 4848 Reston Drive
Dunnellon Easton
FL 34432 PA 18040-6762

Memorial Plaque Information

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

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

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



Spire Sponsors

We **need Sponsors** to help us cover the cost of printing and mailing the Spire. Please let us know if you can help. The sponsorship can be in Memory or in Honor of someone or just a donation.

Mailing costs approximately \$75/month. 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 everyone.

Thank you,
Judy



November Birthdays

November 2	Evan Clarkson	November 20	Vivian Rutherford
November 4	George Lotter		Robert Schulte
	Coe Masters	November 25	Tatiana (Lamberson)
November 6	Benjamin Doolittle	McDowell	
	Rich Masters	November 26	Damien Cook
	Sue Needham	November 27	Irv and Sue Needham
November 10	Twila Williams	November 29	Paula Adams
November 11	Mark and Pam Lewis		
	Kari Lynn Zupanovich		
November 14	Peggy Smith		
November 16	Julie Kesten		
November 18	Cody Nolan		





ROAST BEEF DINNER

Harford First Congregational Church

Harford, PA

November 21, 2020

Presale/Take out only

Drive by pick up from 3-5:30 pm

Call Holli at 570-851-5109 or

text 301-643-1775 to order tickets.

Make checks payable to “Willing Workers”

Adults \$12.00.

Tree of Hope

Come join us in celebrating the Christmas spirit
by hanging an ornament of hope on our
"Tree of Hope"

November 29, 2020

6:00 P.M.

Harford First Congregational Church Front Lawn



All activities will be outside.

Please observe social distancing and wear masks.
There will be firepits for warmth, carol singing, candle
lighting. Cocoa, coffee, and tea will be available.
Ornaments to put what you hope for in the coming year will
be provided as well as paper and writing utensils.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM (Deadline December 5, 2020)

I would like to order:

_____ Red poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

_____ White poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

_____ Pink poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

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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I would like to order:

_____ Red poinsettia plants at \$7.00==\$(total price)

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Given By:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor of _____

Other _____

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

November 2020

November 2020

December 2020

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

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

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov 1 All Saints Day 10:00am Services (sanctuary)	2 9:30am AM mtg (LH) 7:00pm Fair mtg (LH)	3 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	4 1:00pm WW Qtrly mtg (LH)	5 10:00am Pastor in office	6 9:30am Yoga	7 Pastor Day Off
8 10:00am Services (sanctuary) 12:15pm Deacons (By Zoom)	9 9:30am AM mtg (LH) 7:00pm Trustees	10 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	11	12 10:00am Pastor in office	13 9:30am Yoga	14 Pastor Day Off
15 10:00am Services (sanctuary) 12:15pm stewardship (LH)	16 SPIRE DEADLINE-DEC & JAN, 2021 9:30am AM mtg (LH)	17 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH)	18	19 10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm Council (LH)	20 9:30am Yoga	21 Pastor Day Off
22 Pastor Will (Vacation) 10:00am Services (sanctuary)	23 Pastor Will (Vacation) 9:30am AM mtg (LH)	24 Pastor Will (Vacation) 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH)	25 Pastor Will (Vacation)	26 HAPPY THANKSGIVING	27 Pastor Will (Vacation) 9:30am Yoga 5:00pm Weinberg distribution	28 Pastor Day Off Pastor Will (Vacation)
29 Pastor Will (Vacation) 10:00am Services (sanctuary) 6:00pm Christmas tree lighting (outside)	30 Pastor Will (Vacation) 9:30am AM mtg (LH)	Dec 1	2	3	4	5



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