

Our Spire

Volume 42 Number 1

February 2022



Dear Congregation and Friends of *Our Spire*,

Even healthy, vital congregations are riding through deep pains and significant losses. Diminished giving is a norm. Already tight budgets cannot take more hits. Churches are close to closing, or may have already closed.

On Christmas Eve, worship leader Craig Stout announced that the nearby Presbyterian Church in Hallstead had closed its doors for good. That congregation had been an integral part of the Route 11 Corridor long before I began my fulltime ministry here in 2008. This is now gone.

Covid isn't over and inflation just hit a 40-year high. I think we can all admit that we live in an economically repressed area. Middle to high-end housing developments are not popping up anywhere in the northeast corner of Pennsylvania. Recent high school and college graduates are leaving the area. Less recent high school and college graduates have already gone.

When we consider congregational life in the face of so many church deaths, we can also admit this: Vitality is a word that may seem scarce these days. To that end, I was paid to write the column in *The Independent*, our local weekly newspaper. I began Christmas Day, 2018. I gratefully received enough money twice a month from the paper. This added income was very welcomed that helped with grocery shopping. I was paid every two weeks. Since the pandemic began, that added gift to my income is gone. The paper can't afford columnists. I have been writing this column for free since 2020.

A local church closing and bonus money gone are just two very small illustrations of the much bigger and often bleaker picture. We are in a time of hard times. In the face of all of this, read with me the following four verses with joy:

“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here (2 Corinthians 5:17)!”

“Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized [*Scythian*], slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us (Colossians 3: 9-11).”

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland (Isaiah 43:18-19).”

The Apostle Paul is the author of Colossians. He is right when he says in 3:11 that Christ IS all that matters. Thank you, Paul. What I mentioned ahead of the scripture reflects that in this life we do have trials and tribulations (John 16:33). I haven't lost heart.

But joy? Yes, joy. But where? Is there joy in the pressures and the pains of a congregational life coming too close to death? This is not joyful. This is painful. So, let's not look at what isn't. Let's look at what is.

Our joy is in the LORD. Yes, we want the grand joy in the worship practices and traditions we grieve. Those days of glory where the sound of a hymn sung by a full congregation was rich and magnificent—and of course uplifting. But, as you heard in 2 Corinthians 4:14-6-17, our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs our current Covid sorrows. So much is wasting away these days. The old IS gone (or going) and the new is here. What is the new? The new is in what God is doing these days. God is creating something new from something old. We need to be reminded that Christ is all that matters. The Son of God lives in us, not in a building.

It may help us to remember that the church in Corinth the Apostle Paul wrote to isn't there anymore. Its doors closed. But this never stopped God from being God. This tangible loss, hardship and setback didn't stop Christians, either. Vines do need to be pruned in order for new growth to occur. This is happening today. Have joy even in a season of loss and despair. Why? Because in the wasteland, God is making a way through both wilderness and streams.

You've heard God, now respond to His Commitment to you by committing to him

Consider becoming a member of the congregation

God has spoken to you, guided you, shielded you. God has made His plans known to you. God has been with you. God has comforted you. This is all true. The following is true, too. Think of how much the psalmist's words reflect who you praise.

⁵ You have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. ⁸ My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor all day long. ¹⁴ As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more. ¹⁵ My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds, of your saving acts all day long—though I know not how to relate them all. ¹⁶ I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone. ¹⁷ Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. ²² I will praise you ... for your faithfulness, my God; I will sing praise to you ... Holy One ... ²³ My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I whom you have delivered. [Psalm 71:5, 8, 14-17, 22-23]

In the echo of the January 16th text on the baptism of Jesus Christ, remember John the Baptist does not consider himself worthy to untie the straps of Jesus' sandals. He just doesn't consider himself qualified to baptize his cousin, the Savior of the world. But John does take that step. He does something intimate and wonderful with Jesus. You can, too.

If you are not yet a member of Harford First Congregational Church-UCC, I invite you to think about your next faith step. Follow through on what you hear Jesus calling you to do.

The new membership class is a wonderful journey of discovery. In this five-week class which takes place following worship, you'll open your eyes to who you are in the eyes of the Lord. You'll learn of this church's committed and connected history to God, the world, and the community. You'll learn of the longstanding history of the Congregationalism and the newest denomination in the US, the United Church of Christ. Together, we'll talk about how this church "works." This includes the roles of our Deacons, Trustees and the Stewardship Committee. You'll see how our church council comes together for decision making. You'll learn more about the Missionary Society, Ugly Quilts, Christian Education and GAME ON. Perhaps God will lead you to finding a new ministry the church can do in service of Him.

This is one of the most exciting ministry opportunities I have as a pastor because I see with you where—and how—God has brought you to this significant and meaningful part of your life. You'll not only learn more about yourself, but you'll also learn more about those in the class with you. The gentle surprises are always good. The connections are always lasting.

If you'd like to become a member of the church, or if you would like to suggest someone I can invite to become a member of the church, please let me know. Our new membership class can begin in March following worship. We are not set in stone on this, however. As people indicate that they would like to consider membership, I will ask them what day of the week and what time works best in their schedules. We'll let a census be our guide.

I do look forward to this opportunity for church growth, wellness and celebration. I pray that all of us get behind and support this new membership process.

Let's pray: *Lord, You are always doing a new thing. As You did with the first twelve disciples, You are calling us to follow You and be further blessed by Your ministry in the world. Help us build what it means to be one body of who You are. Guide potential new members into conversation with me as pastor. Speak to them. Speak to all of us so that we can all support this gift of being closer to You in commitment. Amen.*

With love, Pastor Will

wrh@nep.net

570-434-7729 landline

570-267-5137 text



New Members Class

A New Members Class is starting March 13, 2022 and will go for 5 Sundays after the service. (Times and Days negotiable)

All are welcome to attend and become more knowledgeable about Harford First Congregational Church—UCC and our beliefs.

Please contact Judy in the office to sign-up for the classes and let us know that you are interested.

Pastor William Hagenbuch and a Deacon will lead the classes with representatives from many of our groups and committees. There will be five classes March 13, 20, 27 and April 3 and 10. Lunch will be provided. Joining the church on April 24, 2022

Topics: History of UCC, History of Harford First Congregational

Structure and Operation of our church, Sacraments and Rituals

Embracing the Differences and Coming together in Love

Personal Faith Journey

Tel.570-434-2260

Email: firstch@nep.net

Christmas Eve Service





Sunday School Christmas Pageant

**Mary, Joseph
and the
Centurion**



**Mary, Joseph,
Baby Jesus and
a Heavenly
Host of Angels**

**Shepherds keeping
watch over their flocks**





The Shepherds went to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus



The Wisemen followed the star to Bethlehem

All the children sang Jesus Love Me and used sign language



Poinsettia delivery!!

Those of you that ordered Poinsettias and then donated them to be delivered into the community.
Here is your Delivery Team!!



Your Poinsettia Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus,
Through the start of this New Year, help me see "Christmas" when I look at this poinsettia.

Help me learn each day that Christmas isn't just one day a year. Christmas is every day.

Help me understand that You, Emmanuel, came to earth as God in human form. You came to us in love, and love is how this poinsettia has been delivered to me and my home.

Help me celebrate Your love.
Help me share Your love.

Amen.

The First Congregational Church-UCC in Harford sends you prayers for wellness and peace as we begin the 2022 New Year.

God Bless you!



Wreaths Across America

Dear Community, as we gathered to honor our fallen soldiers through Wreaths Across America, I begin with a reflection from George Washington. Our first president once said, “Be Americans. Let there be no sectionalism, no North, South, East or West. You are all dependent on one another and should be one in union. In one word, be a nation. Be Americans, and be true to yourselves.”

Covid certainly has been a cause or culprit in our necessary social distancing, but in recent years many see that we Americans have been distant—we have been dividing—for a long time. Similar to Washington, the Apostle Paul speaks to this unnecessary division in Galatians 3:28. He writes, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Today, in this historic cemetery, under the name of Jesus Christ, we have the honor to venerate those who served our nation selflessly and sacrificially. May we not just remember their service. May we rejuvenate their cause. May we unite as we never have before. May we gather in the name of Jesus and see our similarities, not our differences. May we again recognize that we long for a nation where peace is valued above strife, where love is shared not segregated, where justice is not just idealized by a few but practiced by all, where mercy is a common denominator not a hit-and-miss pursuit, where a united vision is again a collective effort not a single force, and where neighbors rejoice in differences not bicker from broken vantage points. It is time for us to be the Americans Washington calls us to be.

Washington’s words are prescient today. He is right. Let us be Americans. Let us see the service of these soldiers as our guide to action in a nation that needs unity, camaraderie, equality, and a positive, collective, “get it done” work ethic that may seem distant but is not gone from our American tapestry.



**DAR Representatives
(Sue Needham and Sue Dyson)
and Veterans
Irv Needham, Kay Gow and
Dale Ferger**

**A wreath for each of the 8 arms of the
military.**



Wreaths cross America Continued.....



In Jesus' first coming, which we celebrate at Christmas, our Savior came to save us from what divides us from Him, which is our sin. In Jesus' second coming, which will one day happen, we will unite with all the souls who gave their lives to Him in love and in service.

In 1 John 3:16, Jesus said, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters." These soldiers, we honor, laid down their lives for our nation. They laid their lives down for us.

I choose to announce today, in this sacred space of those who Christ calls from death to life, that this church, in this New Year, will rally the cause of Christ. I am introducing the word for the year 2022—connection. This meaning of the word connection will unfold for us as the months pass, but I will share now that as a community-oriented, community-based congregation, we will connect. We will gather. We will serve. We will love. We will find our lives connecting with the lives of our brothers and sisters and will move past division to the divine will of God, which is to bring His children to Him.

Let us pray: "Dear Heavenly Father, You connected us to You in the birth of Your Son, Emmanuel. In the spirit of the soldiers we honor and remember today, we connect. We connect to You, our God, and to each other. Amen."



The Daughters of the American Revolution wish to thank you for your assistance in helping to promote “Wreaths Across America” here in Harford. We are now an official site for this worthy cause, to honor those who gave themselves to further independence of our country. Wreaths across America and the Susquehanna DAR have now put Harford Cemetery and Harford First Congregational Church—UCC on the map.

What does it mean to sponsor a wreath? It means you honor an American hero at more than 3000 locations across the USA. The wreath laying happens each year at the same day and time as the laying of the wreath at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC by the President of the United States.

Historically, Harford cemetery has 17 revolutionary soldiers along with other veterans from the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. These, who served our country, should be remembered and honored. The nine partners that settled this area (seven of them are buried in Harford Cemetery) set aside this land and built this church, they wanted it to forever belong to those who will come after them. Each year in December, wreaths will be laid that you and others have donated. Harford is now one of those places we can honor and teach about those veterans and their history.

We started with 17 wreaths and ended up with 120. A big thank you to all who donated, assisted or helped make this a complete success!



Sue Needham



Spire Sponsor

Lois Gibson



Baptism of Brynlee Wynn Phelps

Parents

Allan and Kaylee
Phelps

Godparents

Melanie and Bill Jones



Join Us for Ugly Quilts

Tuesdays 9:15 - 1:00

No Sewing skill required!!

Fun, Friends and Fulfillment

as we make sleeping bags
for the homeless.



Dear Harford First Congregational Church - UCC members and friends,

We bid farewell to 2021 and as the Stewardship Committee, we look to a fresh start in 2022. This committee's purpose and duty is to review financial aspects of the church from yearly budgets of all committees to investments of church monies.

It has been a challenging year for many including Harford First Congregational Church. Covid, less attendance in church, fixed and increasing expenses, as well as decreased pledges and income have all contributed to a time of uncertainty.

2021 has ended with a close balance of expenses and income for our church. How will our financial situation be a year from now?

We need to be mindful of Stewardship's Fall Campaign slogan, "Up the Creek with a Paddle." Jesus is at the helm, as we call on Him for wisdom, care, compassion, and love in our daily lives.

May we "Reach Up to God and Reach Out to People" with these gifts as well as financial support striving to keep our church viable, open and welcoming to our community.

May God bring you peace, love, and hope in 2022. Peggy Empet, Stewardship Chairman

Pastor's Report to Council:

- Facebook accounts get hacked. If you read something that seems to be from me but seems a little bit off, please contact me directly. ABOVE ALL, do not send money to anything based solely on a single message from me, your pastor.

-I delivered the poinsettias that had been in the sanctuary to members of our congregation and our community. I also delivered some to our community who are not directly linked to our church. The HVA received eight poinsettias.

-It was a joy to baptize Brynlee Wynn Phelps on January 16th, parents Allan and Kaylee Phelps. How grateful we all are that the family could be present to the baptism of this gift from God.

-Sunday, January 9th, ice storm. I preached my first at home fireside sermon at home. We did miss a giving opportunity that Sunday. For those who don't tithe or pledge, I remind gently remind you that we missed a Sunday to support our ministries here.

-I have stepped into the leadership role with the Ministerium (the Route 11 Corridor). A significant number in this local pastor's group relocated just before Covid struck. Rebuilding the group in this time of Covid has been a great challenge. This year, three of us pastors who were able to gather in January are suggesting we plan an in-person Lenten series. IF our county remains high in Covid cases at the start of Lent (Ash Wednesday is March 2nd), we may have to rethink our plans. We will set a schedule for the Lenten series this month.

-Continuing education, I have signed up for an online program called KINGDOM BUILDERS ACADEMY. At a cost of \$97.00, this three-day course teaches pastors about how to reach and inspire Christians with God's message in this new age. I enrolled in this program to learn more about how I can be more present to us as a congregation that has had to redefine itself since Covid began.

-Conference minister, Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 2nd. When we meet, we talk about my ministry in Harford, our congregation, and the relationship we have as pastor and faith community.

-I continue posting info to prep for Sunday worship. I welcome all feedback on the Sermon Intro, the Midweek Meditation, the vlogs, the blogs, the Sermon Preps and the Worship Invite. It is my goal to extend our congregation and the Word of God to the community close—and not so close—to Harford. This ministry output does not replace gathering in person. We NEED to GATHER together. We need a place to be Christians and to share in Christ's love *in a location*.

-Ash Wednesday service will take place at 7 PM in our sanctuary. Time with God will help me find where and how to lead this service and our Lenten season together.

-New membership class. The past class met in the fall following Sunday worship. This time and day may not work best for this new class. I ask for prayers for this process.

-One of my latest newspaper columns speaks to the divide every congregation feels on the subject of Covid vaccinations. I titled the column, *Let "I've done my research" mean "I'm doing my research"*. Instead of taking an either/or stance on the subject of vaccinations, I invite each and every one of us to continue to do research.

-Please keep in prayers those who are on a cancer journey, those who are grieving, who are financially and/or emotionally stressed in any way, and those who carry heavy loads most of us will never learn about. Let's also pray for times we can be present and loving to our senior population., reach out with a call or a card.

Christian Education: 1-24-2022

We are averaging 22-30 children per Sunday spread over 5 classes, Nursery, Pre-K – Kindergarten, Grades 1-2-3, Grades 4-5-6 and a Youth Class (Junior high – High School).

Two of our teachers had to step down due to work and other stressors (Tatiana MacDowell, Kassandra Lamberson). They will be missed.

Two new teachers stepped up to take the PK – Kindergarten class, Ellen Holdredge and Adele Bennett. We are so thankful to them!!

Our Christmas pageant was a success and the children present did a wonderful job telling the story of Jesus' birth. Half of the expected children had stomach flu were unable to be present.

We have had 2 weeks off for Christmas and New Year and 1 week off due to weather. We started back up January 16, 2022 with 26 children and promptly had to close due to COVID. If MountainView School closes due to COVID, we also cancel Sunday School.

-One congregant pledged enough money in 2022 to cover curriculum for 1 year.

-Karen Jones, Art Director, created the Christmas Decoration seen to the right! Wonderful!

-Kandy Wellman led the Children's Finale at the pageant with Jesus Loves Me and ASL Hand Signing. Fantastic!

-Abby Toolan, Becci Warren, Adele Bennett, Ellen Holdredge, Ashley Parsons, Aubrey Daniels, Kay Gow, Charlene Martens and Pastor Will have done a great job teaching Sunday School and loving our kids!!

We look forward to a fantastic 2022!!



**Spire Sponsor
In honor of
Vivian Rutherford**

Nelson and Wally

Deacon Minutes: 1-23-2022

Attending: Kay Gow, Gail Batzel, Nancy Burris, Linda Lindsey, Will Hagenbuch, Craig Stout, Lisa Hahn

Opened in Prayer – Will Hagenbuch

Senior Companion: Linda Brought a program to our attention, Senior Companion Program. It is a program through the Area Agency on Aging that matches person over 55 and income qualified with seniors that would like to have some company and a friend. The benefits to the companion are a meaningful volunteer experience, travel and meal reimbursement, stipend, recognition and training. This is a worthy program and will be put in the Spire for those interested.

Meals on Wheels: This program will be researched and contacted for ways that our congregation can reach out into the community.

Outreach Program: A Valentine's Day outreach was discussed. We plan to send Valentine's Day Cards to our shut-ins. We plan to assemble a small Valentine Goody Bag and card to be delivered by Deacons and the congregation. The congregation will be asked to stay after service February 6 for Goody Bag assembly. The Goody Bag Cards will be crafted by the Junior/Senior High Sunday School Class. The completed bags will be available after the service to be taken by the congregation to be distributed to persons that would appreciate the gesture (neighbors and such). Each Deacon will also take several for distribution.

Worship Music: Singing during worship was discussed. It was thought that we should strive to limit hymns to 1-2 verses if possible. It was also decided to limit the offertory to instrumental or choir.

Communion: It was decided to keep the Communion Elements to pre-packaged for the present.

New Member Class: The new member class begins March 13, 2022 and continues for 5 weeks. We plan to continue with asking committee representatives to join for a class. We will have the class after service and will begin at 11:15-12:45, lunch will be provided. Each class will have a co-teacher Deacon to team with Pastor Will to help guide the conversations and help with the agenda. We will determine the Deacon schedule at the next meeting.

Meeting Time for Deacon Meetings: Currently the only time that seems to work is 12:15 Sundays. We will see how this time actually goes and adjust as needed.

Representative to Council: Linda Lindsey will be our representative May-October
Kay Gow will be our representative November-April

Fellowship Time: At present, we will not have Adult Fellowship time. As the number of COVID cases decrease, we will revisit having this special time. The Sunday School will have snack time in the Lecture Hall and spaced apart.

Bible Study: The "Meeting the Spirit" Bible study lead by Craig Stout is going very well. Several people have asked for an alternative time due to conflicts. Craig will start another "Meeting the Spirit" Bible study on February 21, 2022 at 6:30 at the church. We will advertise this new study in the Spire.

Next meeting is Sunday, February 21, 2022 at 12:15 in-person and zoom

Missionary Group Minutes: 1-18-2022

Attending: Karen Jones, Kay Gow, Ellen Holdredge, Priscilla Allen, Holli Chichester, Sherry Decker

Opened With Prayer

Treasurer's Report: Beginning Balance: \$3363.86

Deposit: \$74.00

\$ 54.00 Goody Bags Fall Festival

\$360.18 Bibles for CE

\$500.00 Interfaith

\$200.00 WRC

\$200.00 CareNet

\$500.00 Partnership in Hope (Nicaragua)

\$200.00 Weinberg Food Bank

\$200.00 Susquehanna Child Evangelism

Ending Balance: \$1225.68

Least Coin: Language Classes in France for Immigrants

Gender Violence for Farm Workers

Children's Rights Seminars

Safe Harbor for Domestic Violence in Puerto Rico

Operation Christmas Child: All of our OCC shoeboxes went to Honduras in Central America

Correspondence: Out: 6 cards out this month to persons that are sick or lost a loved one or Christmas wishes.

In: Letter from Japanese Sister church

Thank yous from CareNet, Interfaith, Partnership in Hope, WRC,

Susquehanna Child Evangelism

Soup: out to 3 persons

Council Representative: Feb 10 Peg Empet
March 24 Sherry Decker
April 28 Karen Jones

Care Package: (Evan Clarkson): Each person will contribute items to the package

Plan to have **Election Day Bake Sale** in May.

Next meeting: February 15, 2022

Attention Snow Birds and Travelers!!!

If you have two residences that you inhabit during the year, I have a simple request for you. Would you please let the church office know when you will be moving from one home to the other home?



We are charged \$.78 for having the incorrect address and having to have the mail article returned. The Spire is mailed the end of the month, if you might be returning home or going away around the end of a month it would be very much appreciated if you could let the office be aware of where you will be living. Thanks ever so much, Judy

Stewardship— 1-20-2022

Julia reviewed her copious treasurer's report with the committee, answered and clarified questions as we discussed the plight of our budgeted expenses and income for 2022.

Substantial increases in fuel, electricity, and insurances over what has been budgeted for this year made it clear to the committee that the proposed budget could not be approved as presented.

Forming a committee with representation from Deacons, Trustees, Stewardship, and Council to address the financial situation was proposed.

Suggestions for increasing church attendance and hopefully some income included:

- Inviting a family member, neighbor, or friend to church
- Sunday School attendance has been good, but children and families don't stay for church.
- Perhaps one Sunday a month could be recognition of Sunday School and guests present
- More emphasis given to online attenders and giving online during the service

Peggy Empet,
Stewardship Chairman

Trustee Meeting Minutes: January 10, 2022

Bill Chichester, Gary Housel, Rick Masters, Irv Needham, Kandy Wellman were in attendance.

Old Business

There is a package of Handicap parking signs in the storage room which could be used to add a few "reserved" parking spaces for those that would benefit from being able to park closer. Gary will put them up

Gary confirmed Brandon Bennett will continue plowing and Tanner Stout will continue shoveling. Kandy mentioned that Brendan Herbert may be able to spread Anti-skid in a pinch.

Irv again brought up the need for additional fans for certain hot days when the kitchen is being utilized. Irv recommended an exhaust fan that could go in the window on those occasions.

New Business

New Officers were installed as follows:

Chair Person: Gary Housel

Vice-Chairperson: Harry Gardner

Secretary: Rick Masters

Representative to Council: Bill Chichester/Kandy Wellman

Report for Spire and Minutes to Office: Rick Masters

Gary would like to get a new light for the side entrance to the church. Kandy mentioned an additional flood light there that could illuminate the driveway would be helpful to see people. Gary offered to check with Spectrum Electric on doing the work. Solar power vs. battery operated lights were also discussed.

Respectfully submitted, Rick Masters

I HAVE DREAM TOO—If I could write a letter to MLK, this is what I'd share.



Dear Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.,
You shared your dream. It reaches (and teaches) mine. You saw suffering and wrongdoing. I do, too. You saw hope and a future. I do, too. You saw racial injustice and a nation that could do better.

I see a nation that has moved so far from the church that the quieter ones are now gone. These churches that once housed the very scripture you preached from have closed for good. What remains in those cold and now unlit sanctuaries is the smell of suffering. Wrongdoing—the enemy himself—certainly had a hand here, too.

Your soul hurt. My soul hurts, too. Yet you rallied. You still do—somehow. Your spirit, like that of Jesus', didn't die. You taught me that when you follow life, life will always find you.

I am glad to write to you because here I can say that I pray what you prayed. "God, use me each day." "God, make me the pastor you call me to be each day." "God, let me see what You see—which is love each day."

Martin, if I may call you this, you walked through segregation. I walk through Covid. The cries between these two chapters in history are so very, very different, like the two of us. But you fought with passion and platforms and pulpits. I fight with a passion and a pulpit and posts.

Keep on being an icon, a visionary, and a trailblazer to me. Keep your dream of a better tomorrow in me. Inspire each of us with your dream. Like Barnabas had Paul, call each of us. Charge each of us. Bring liberation scripture to our souls and overwhelming justice to our missions by leading us to the presence of God, the passion of Jesus, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

With appreciation, Reverend Doctor William Hagenbuch

Directory Update

Laurie Thorn	Ben and Joy Heckman
2731 Plank Road	950 Main Street
New Milford,	Simpson., PA 18407
PA 18834	(Abby Toolan's mom and dad)
570-551-1250	



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 Loving Memory of
Steve Decker
and
Marjorie Brainard**

- Sherry Decker



Bible Study

Meeting the Spirit — Bible Study

Have you realized that the Holy Spirit promised by God is available to you?

Have you heard that having the Holy Spirit in your life can make a difference in your life?

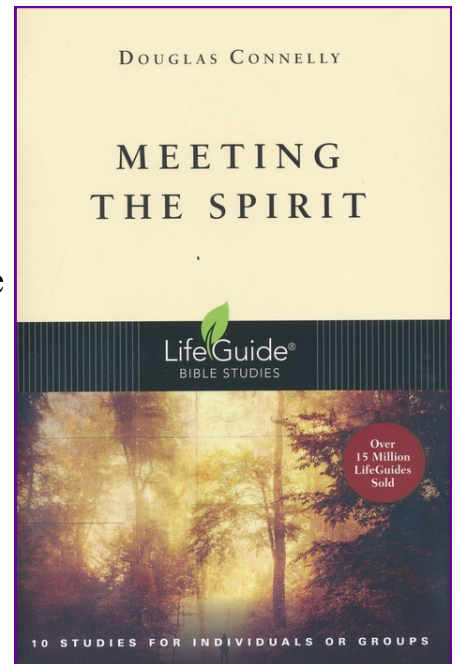
Would you like to see if you can encounter the Spirit in a life changing way?

Join us in the church office workroom as we gather around the table and dive into scripture and discussion about various Scriptures in the New Testament.

We look forward to seeing you! Sundays at 9:00am. **You can enter the Bible Study at any time so newcomers are welcome!**

Craig Stout will be offering this same study on Monday at 6:30 starting February 21, 2022. Please call Craig and let him know if you are interested.

Contact Judy in the office or call Craig direct at 570-396-7080 to let us know you'll be joining us!



Bell Choir Starting Back Up!!!!

Would you like to hear the sounds of the handbell choir again? We're in need of some new ringers. No experience necessary. Some ability to read music is helpful but if you can count to 4, you can ring handbells. Currently meeting Mondays at 4:00-5:00.



Please contact the director, Bob DeLuca
70-498-7090 to join!

No practice in February!



ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2, 2022 at 7:00PM

Harford First Congregational Church - UCC



Attention!

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

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



Our Sunday School (9:00-9:45) is now open with five classes: Birth to 3 years, Pre-K to Kindergarten, 1-2-3 grades, 4-5-6 grades and a teen meeting class for grades 7-12.

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

Men's Breakfast



February 8, 2022
at 7:30am

at Bingham's Restaurant.

The second Tuesday of each month.



Calling All Gardeners

The Memorial Garden has been adopted by Dick and Delores Berish! Thank you!!!

Nicky Bernosky has volunteered to adopt the front landscaping around the church, but would love someone to help her in the Spring! Please call the office if you are willing to help beautify our Church Grounds.

570-434-2260



Correspondence:

The Officers and Members of Harford Volunteer Fire Company thank you very much for your donation to our department.

We sincerely appreciate and gratefully acknowledge your generosity.

Thank you so much!

Best Wishes

George Lotter

Harford Volunteer Fire Company

Secretary

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all the cards, calls and other greetings I received at Christmas time and in the New Year. They sit on the book case where I can see them to add a bright spot to my day.

Many blessings to you as the New Year unfolds.
Jean Bonham

You may access the Harford First Congregational Church—UCC 2021 Annual Report using this link:

<https://firstchurchharford.com/newsletter-our-spire-and-annual-report>



Celebrate the joys in life!

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

Contact Tammy at 570-396-7081

for more information or to request your celebration sign.

Problems or Issues regarding

Harford First Congregational Church—UCC?

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

Home Bound



Lynola Carey

Barbara Pease

Martha Jenkins

Dorothy Greene

Joanne Connolly

Norma Carey

Helen Foster

Lou and John Zimmerman

Prayer Concerns

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

-We pray for our national and local leaders

-All school districts—this includes school board members, administration, faculty, staff, parents and students

-Craig Stout and Family

-for those with medical issues large and small

-for those affected in anyway by the COVID virus

-David and Brandy and family

-Those with Alzheimer's and their families

-those experiencing financial pressures

-those fighting addiction

-Lois Gibson and all those in nursing homes along with their families

-Will's five foster kids

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

-Sandy Zupanovich

-Mark Gregory

-health or loss of family pets

-Connie Schulte's son Phil

-Gregg Symuleski and family

-Nancy Marr

-Gina Yarrish's daughter Missy

-Martha Manko

-Makel Silfee

-law enforcement officers

-emergency volunteers

-hospital workers

-fire personnel



-Small businesses struggling

-Patrick Simons

-Harry Gardner

-Samantha Valentine

-Linda Lindsey

-Sal Armetta and family

-Steve Holtsmaster

-Karen Jones relative

-Kristin Williams

-Lola and John Zimmerman

-Parraga Family

-Lynn Hernandez

-Braxton MacDowell

-Doris Wages daughter Laura (brain tumor)

-Karen Doolittle

-Earl Gow

-Gia Fanelli, Wendy Phillip's daughter-in-law

-Paula Adams

-Family of Donna Biesecker

-Family of Scott Baldwin

-Joe Megivern

-Ginny Ahearn

-Gift of Life Program (Organ Donation)

-Kandy's Daughters family—Covid

-Andy Granick

-Franny (Kay's friend)

-Leanne Colwell family's health

Birthdays and Anniversaries

February Birthdays/Anniversaries

February 4 Dana Empet

February 15 Kim Bridgeman

Kathi Ferger

February 18 Charlie Grimes

Justin Moser

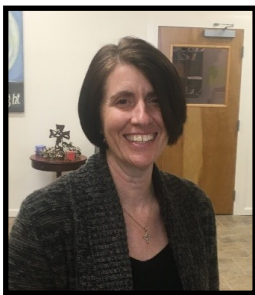
February 23 Lynette Muller



February 25 Jim and Gail Batzel

February 27 Charline Hudson

February 28 Kay Gow



Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church



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

Next distributions February 25, 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.



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





Emails

It has come to our attention that some of you may not be receiving our email prayer lists.

This is an oversight that we would like to correct.

Please call or email Judy and let her know that you are not receiving the emails.

Tel.570-434-2260
Email: firstch@nep.net

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

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

Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of February 2022!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Memorial Plaque Information

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

Cost---\$25.00

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

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



Tired of cooking every night?



**Pulled Pork
Sale**

**All Proceeds will be given to
Harford First Congregational
General Fund**

**One Quart of Pulled Pork
in Sauce**

Pre-Order by February 20

For February 27, 2022 pick-up after church

To order call or text Holli at 301-643-1775 or email at

hollischichester@gmail.com

February Greeters and Ushers

Feb. 6 - Shirley Masters (Greeter)

Nancy Burris (Usher)

Feb. 13-Sharon Decker (Greeter)

Priscilla Allen (Usher)

Feb. 20-Peggy Empet (Greeter)

Bill Chichester (Usher)

Feb. 27-Karen Jones (Greeter)

Kay Gow (Usher)



HARFORD TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS - SURVEY

Are you interested in improving the
ballfield and creating a community park?

Please take this survey!

<https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3v2d>



To take the survey on paper,
stop at the Township Office Mon-Fri from 10am-4pm

Join our Facebook group:
Search for "Harford Township Park"

Harford Township Municipal Authority
DANA Empet, Rick Masters, Josh Olivo,
Shawn Krause, Brad Millard
harfordmunicipal@gmail.com

PUBLIC INPUT - SURVEY
HARFORD TOWNSHIP BALL FIELD / PARK MASTER SITE PLAN

HARFORD TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
(PARK COMMITTEE) NEEDS YOUR INPUT !!!

WE ENCOURAGE PARENTS & KIDS TO TAKE THIS SURVEY TOGETHER.

Project Need:

Harford Township is committed to providing its residents with a fun, well-maintained and safe place to play. The Harford Township Municipal Authority (Park Committee) and the Township are eager to upgrade and improve the Township Ball

Harford Township

Fields off of School Street. The current ball field has potential to be reimagined and developed into a full-season recreation area that can provide a variety of play options, from playgrounds, swings and courts to gathering areas, wellness/hiking trails and open lawn. Well-maintained parks increase the appeal and wellness of our community and provide a venue for worthwhile community events.

Your opinion is respected and it is needed during this planning process. *What would be in your ideal park? What can the Township do better? What does Harford not have? What do you like to play? Do you have a new vision for this recreation space?* Please complete this survey so we can find out what is important to you. With proper planning and community involvement, this park can be improved to meet the needs of all residents, young and old.

Project Goals:

- Evaluate the condition of the Ball Fields, including safety, accessibility, parking and drainage.
- Consider expanding from a single-season ball field into a 4-season municipal park.
- Identify long-term park recreation needs, as guided by public input.
- Prepare improvement plans for public review and comment.
- Strategize a phased approach to help the Township start improvements.



Use this link to take survey online: <https://www.surveylegend.com/s/3v2d>

Or fill out this paper survey and return to the Township Building

Seniors in your neighborhood need your friendship and support.

Be a Senior Companion!

Senior Companions are volunteers age 55+ who provide friendship and assistance to older adults who need help with tasks, such as shopping, appointments and recreation time. The program aims to help older adults maintain their independence longer, and provide assistance to family caregivers.

As a Senior Companion, you can earn **\$400+** per month without decreasing your housing, medical, food, disability or other assistance you may be receiving. You'll make new friends and help improve the quality of life for older adults in your community.



Senior Companions Provide:

Friendship and social support

Respite for caregivers

Support with daily activities*

Transportation for shopping, appointments and more

**Senior Companions do not provide physical assistance with lifting clients, ambulating, toileting, dressing, cooking or cleaning.*

Benefits

- Pay that goes straight into your pocket, tax-free
- Pay that does not decrease any assistance programs you may have including disability, food, housing and all others programs
- Paid time off
- Holiday pay
- Meal and mileage reimbursement
- Flexibility and independence
- Be a member of the Senior Companion group who share the mission of helping
- Create new social networks/ Make new friends

You can become a Senior Companion if you:

- Have the ability to transport others
- Are at least 55 years old and live on a limited income
- Live in See below
- Want to belong to a group of peers and staff who support you

2009c.11/19

Senior Companion Program

Covers Susquehanna, Bradford, Sullivan and Tioga Counties.

If you or someone you know would like to get additional information on being a companion or getting a companion, call June Werner at 1-800-982-4346.

In church contact: Holli Chichester (Deacons) 301-643-1775



B/S/S/T Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

1-800-982-4346

Meals on Wheels Endless Mountains Drivers

Just a few hours a week can make all the difference...

Meals on Wheels Endless Mountains volunteers pick up prepared meals at local Active Living Centers and deliver them to seniors in need of a nutritious, noon-time meal. The volunteer drivers are provided training, mileage reimbursement, and personal protective equipment to promote safety while serving.



Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Opportunities

Our local Area Agency on Aging is in need of some very vital volunteers to help maintain their much needed programs for our elderly.

They need: Drivers

Ombudsman

Site Workers

PA MEDI

Visitors

Senior Companion (previous page)

Callers

They have four local site: Clifford, Great Bend, Fair Dale and Waynesboro.

To get more information on the programs and volunteer opportunities check their website at www.bsstaa.org or call Lynne Jenks at 570-278-3751.

Church Contact: Holli Chichester (Deacons) 301-643-1775

February 2022

February 2022							March 2022							
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22
27	28						27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Jan 30	31	Feb 1	2	3	4	5
		9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	1:00pm WW Qtrly mtg (LH)	10:00am Pastor in office		10:00am Care Youth mtg (LH)
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
7:30am Fire Co. 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 10:00am Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	10:00 KWWW 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Girl Scouts (LH) 7:30pm Harford Fair mtg (LH)	7:30am Men's Breakfast (Bingham's) 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	7:30am WW Qtrly mtg (LH)	10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm Council (LH)		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 10:00am Service 11:15am Deacons (LH) 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 7:00pm Trustees (PO)	9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH) 6:00pm Choir		10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm Stewardship (LH)		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Pulled pork deadline 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 10:00am Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 12:00pm Ladies lunch (Bingham's)	9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir		10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm Council (LH)	4:30pm Weinberg-pick up	
27	28	Mar 1	2	3	4	5
Officers installation Pulled Pork pickup 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 10:00am Service	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO)					



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