

Our Spire

Volume 41

December 2021 -

January 2022

Number 10

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

I'm not talking leftover turkey: thankful giving isn't just a November thing

It's just like the magic penny, if you remember the Sunday school song. If we hold too tightly to what we think we have in terms of our possessions, we will actually have less.

This may be exactly what Jesus was speaking to when he said to his disciples, "Come follow me." The twelve who would enter a life-changing, faith-building, three-year ministry with Jesus weren't asked to fill the cart Jesus was pushing with their carry-on luggage. Instead, Jesus invited them into what could be called a 'manna and quail' life of thankful living that would become thankful giving.

We receive heavenly manna and quail each day. Of course, I'm not being literal with what God's people received during their wilderness journey, but you know this is true: each day we do receive gifts from God. When we intentionally practice lives of thankful living that includes our awareness and our celebration of our receiving manna and quail, we turn to giving. Specifically, we turn to thankful giving.

The difference between giving and thankful giving is in how the giving is, well, given! I mentioned one Sunday school song a moment ago, *The Magic Penny*. Now think about the hymn, *Count Your Blessings*. When we begin to count the blessings we have, we have an attitude shift. **We operate not out of a fear of not enough. We overflow in the faith of our God who is always providing more than enough.**

Admit your prayer life is like mine. It regularly includes being thankful to God (or should regularly include thankfulness to God). But how about our prayers for thankful giving? With whatever God is calling you to give (and, like the disciples mentioned, God is calling you to follow Him and give), I invite you to think not just about giving, but pray for a life of thankful giving.

Thankful giving is completely joy-based. Thankful giving is also abundance-based. The story of Moses, manna and quail and the 40-year journey may be specific to only a certain part of our collective journey with God through barren places. But think of this. What was true then also holds true today: every gift we have is not ours. Every gift we have is given by God.

Share this!

I usually write the pastor's page from the familiar surrounds of my writing desk at home on a computer screen that I have matter-of-factly been told is too big. I love that space. I love that computer.

This page is written from an entirely different location. As I type on my laptop, I want to share that I am at 34,000 feet above the breadbasket of America. Here on this big, smooth riding airplane, all my fellow passengers and the flight crew are wearing mandatory face masks. Seated so closely, I see a cross section of who we are really. All of us. Affluent. Stingy. Open. Closed. Friendly. Distant.

As I am surrounded by an entirely different set of people, I realize all of us could be doing more thankful living. This thankful living leads to more thankful giving. How do we more thankfully give? We follow Jesus. For example, when the Lord said, "Let the children come to me," this is just what he meant. Let them come!

Come to what? I invite you to consider this. What, exactly, are we living? What are we giving? Is it a hollow invite or is it a place and space of consideration, connection and camaraderie?

Like Jesus, we have something to give because, at the core, we are a people who give. This is who we are. This is what we are. **Being givers of faith, hope, love, and care is not a goal, it's an identity. Specifically, it is our identity.**

Here is my post-Thanksgiving challenge. Let the season of thankful giving continue into December and the New Year. Send that compliment. Shoot that praise to someone you know well or have recently met. Celebrate that accolade with the one you're thinking of and admire. Share that smile. Hum that song that will make others smile. Open your wallet wisely, yes, and open your wallet more when you know God is asking you to do so. High-five that kiddo. Whistle. Laugh. Lighten up. Listen through your soul which you know still has that child in you.

Here's the truth. Thankful living in God's abundance easily leads us to thankful giving. Give thankfully.



Sunday School Christmas Pageant

Hello parents, the Harford First Congregational Church is planning our 2021 Christmas Pageant. The pageant will be held December 19, 2021 during the 10:00 church service. This service will be a Youth-led service and we plan the service to be somewhat shorter to meet the needs of children and their parents.

The Sunday School will be practicing this pageant December 5 and 12 during the Sunday School time. The nursery through the 5th grade will have no lines to learn and the teachers will be with them during the entire pageant so that they will have direction and to give the children confidence. The children will have simple costumes and we will be singing the first verse of many well known Christmas carols. It would be very helpful if the children could attend both practices so that they are comfortable with the proceedings. We are requiring masks for everyone's safety.

Our youth (7th-12th grades) will narrate the pageant and lead specific portions of the service. We will have refreshments after the service to celebrate with our children.

If you would like to assist in this production or make cookies for the take home goodie bag, please let me know by texting or calling me at 301-643-1775.

Thank you, Holli Chichester and the Sunday School Staff

Dear congregation, with COVID on the upswing, we would like to pump up our measures to ensure the safety of all.

-We encourage the wearing of masks while at the church but will not send anyone home for not wearing a mask. We have hand sanitizer available all around the church for use.

-Please report cases of COVID if you have contracted COVID and come in contact with any persons in the congregation so we can avoid spread.

-We will suspend our Fellowship time until after the new year.

-Our Sunday School will continue and we will require masks for the children as well as the teachers. We will start preparing for our Christmas pageant December 5 and 12. The Christmas pageant will be held during worship December 19 at 10:00. We invite all to attend and support our children and youth.

The “Wows” of Christmas

You could describe my seven-year-old as giddy, gleeful, and *grand* about the idea of Christmas. She asks as I hold a wad of Christmas tree lights in front of our freshly-cut tree standing majestically in the house. “It’s Christmas time, right?”

“Um,” I answer.

It’s November 26th. The tangle in my hands is taking some thought, especially since this string is already connected to what I’ve already placed on the tree.

She pauses. Unsatisfied with what she has just heard, she asks again. “It’s Christmas time, right?”

My girl raises a good question. It is Christmas time, right?

Advent is the time we prepare for Christmas, just as we were doing with the tree. You can see how my fellow decorator—overwhelmed by the scent of the spruce and the aura of the lights—could ask what she asked.

When my soon-to-be nine-year-old helped us a few minutes later, I won’t forget the sound he made with the word, “Wow.” He had just brought me yet another string of lights. This one was on a spool. He plugged this in for me and the sudden shock of golden light cradled in my arms made me think of what the shepherds might have said when they first laid their eyes on Jesus.

Yes. “Wow.”

Before the birth of Christ, people were waiting for the light of the world. The prophets’ predictions about a Savior on earth were just words. Remember, four-hundred years lapsed between Micah, the last book in the Old Testament, and the first book in the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew. Having this Chosen One from God actually being here on the planet seemed implausible, if not all-out impossible. So many must have considered these long-ago words to be outrageous fiction.

But these words are not a far-off dream. God came as a newborn who would die on a cross to save us from the sins we create and cannot escape from.

This is the biggest “Wow” of all time.

Three minutes after my son said, “Wow,” he did a doozy to his sister, the Christmas cheerleader. Convicted by what he had done, he cried.

With his tears, I shared that we can never get out of the doozies we have done, the sins that convict us. Only Jesus can do this.

This release from sin is Christmas. And this is not seasonal, this is every day.

The biggest “Wow” of all time is that Christmas never leaves us. It is always here. Christ saving us from our sins is ongoing.

Enjoy the “Wows” of Christmas through Advent. Like the ancient predictions from the prophets of long ago, the trees and the lights and the gift-giving are not outrageous. They are celebrations of a God who sets us free from our sinful selves.





Christmas Tree Lighting 2021





Reilly Potter

An Eagle Scout court of honor was held at the Starucca Baptist Church Friday, November 26, 2021. Reilly is a third generation Eagle Scout.

His project was a Veteran’s Memorial in Starucca.

Reilly said that he wasn’t crazy about scouting as a Cub Scout and as a young boy scout was struggling in his troop so he came to Harford and joined Pack #98. They welcomed him and made him feel comfortable as a part of the troop.

Harford First Congregational Church gifted him with a copy of A Every Man’s Bible.



Attention

**All Knitters and Crocheters
We have depleted
our reserve of baby
blankets for the Cradle Roll.**



**Please Call or text Holli Chichester
if you have blankets that you would be willing to donate!
Holli 301-643-1775**



*Merry
Christmas!*

**Spire
Sponsor
Lois
Gibson**

People, stick with the paddles up the creek

Black Friday isn't enough. Now there's "GivingTuesday".



You may be on to this, but I just learned about Giving Tuesday for the first time. I read of this day in the HOLIDAY LIVING 2021, an Advertising Supplement to *The Independent*. There on page 10, across from my column in this edition, is the headline that reads, "How to participate in GivingTuesday (no space between the two words), a one-day event of giving at the front end of the retail blitz season upon us now. Giving Tuesday happens on the first Tuesday following Thanksgiving. According to the article, "GivingTuesday is a movement that unleashes the power of radical generosity around the world. GivingTuesday is often characterized as hashtag activism..."

The radical generosity that we Christians know and share isn't a day of the year. It's every day of every year. Why? Because Christ dying on the cross for our sins and our eternal salvation is the *ultimate* meaning of radical generosity.

GivingTuesday is another sign of the secular world we live in today. With less and less church, there are more and more non-Christian efforts housed well in humanitarianism. As more and more churches close for good, the basic need for people to care goes elsewhere.

We are seeing a hurting, struggling world. We are seeing the lost, the lonely and the broken perhaps in ways we've never seen before. Sure, one-day charitable events like GivingTuesday are far, far better than no charitable events at all, but I invite you to remember the fall stewardship sermon series, *Going Up the Creek With a Paddle*.

That homespun series began this past June in my office. A group of us looked at all the hurt and hardship in the world and wanted to speak to this. Ideas for the stewardship sermon series began, culminating with the October series that included a new word each week on the authentic paddle in the sanctuary. The words we learned from and lived into are:

Compassion Wisdom Commitment Christ Courage

We need all of these words far more than we need a special one-day commercial campaign. These words help us get up our own creeks. Equally, they help us help others get up their own creeks, too. They draw us not to ourselves and our merits. They lead us to Christ and the Christian response to those around us in need.

The stewardship series helps us do far more throughout the year. As an organization of love and care—as a church that does things—the series draws us to the opportunities we have to give and give well. We want to help. We want to be present. We want to be used by Christ in gentle, subtle ways as individuals and intentional, significant ways as a church.

Consider how God is gifting you as you read this. Our Lord has given you hands and a heart for use. When you think of giving on a Tuesday, for example, what, exactly, does that look like? How can the church meet your goal, your dream, and your passion? Gifting the church enables others to be gifted. The Stewardship series hasn't ended. Opportunities to pledge, volunteer, motivate wellness and activate joy happen each day of the week, each month of the year, and every year. Together, let's help others through rough waters. See me or a stewardship member to discuss where God is calling you. We are here to listen to you because, with Christ, we are all here to care.

A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR ABOUT A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE

As I was reviewing our current financial situation, I realized that I was facing a wonderful opportunity. I have the opportunity to lead by example. I have decided to forego my annual raise this year in light of the beautiful situation we are experiencing with our finances. This is a beautiful situation. You may immediately think of this with such words—beautiful, really?—but God is calling us to Him in a way He has not before. God is asking us to let Him bless the gifts we have, not keep our gifts to ourselves.

This is an amazing challenge for me personally. It can make my stomach rumble and my teeth chatter. I have five mouths to feed! The cost of living is not going down! But I trust God and lean on God to guide us through this situation that will turn out in His favor and ours.

I see God using this time as an opportunity for us to see who we really are. Do we really mean what we say? Do we care, or do we superficially care?

I know the answer to those two questions. You do, too. We do mean what we say. We do care tremendously. We are not just a church that is open. We are church that is open and invested in ongoing community outreach and care. Said differently, we are not in this for ourselves. We are in this to share the love of Christ to others in word and in action.

These lean times mean we lean in even further and see the blessings and the bounty God does provide.

God wants us to give our treasures so that He can bless these gifts. Thinking that “someone else will do it” when it comes to our resources is not what we are called to do. Looking at the budget and adding our proverbial two cents isn’t the way to go, either. I’m not saying we should not have a voice in the budget. Speak up. Speak out. What I am saying is to honor the decisions our church council has set for the future of this congregation.

I realize I have to earn my keep. I will do so.

In September 2022, I enter my fourteenth year as your pastor. This will make me the third longest standing pastor in this church’s history. This is significant. In my fifty-five years of life, and as a member of this church since I was fourteen, no pastor has had this standing. I have a spiritual, emotional and familial investment. I care and I love this church and its people.

Remember, I am the seventh generation on this land. You can date my family back to John Carpenter, one of the Nine Partners. I’m not renting space at the pulpit waiting for a better deal now that I hold a doctorate. I’m a landowner, a homeowner here in Harford. “You are in this for the long race,” the Apostle Paul would say to me if he could.

We are going to get through this remarkably well. You’ll see. As I write this on November 30, 2021, I have learned that our pledges are coming in. We have to honor those pledges and hear God speak to us as other gifts come in. Our lean, tight ministry outreach programs run efficiently and effectively. We care what we do. We do what we will say we will do. We love our God. Our God loves us. Even more great opportunities to witness and live Jesus’s love are just around the corner.

I repeat. This is a beautiful situation. See it as I do. Respond to it with heart, prayer and a commitment to the church of today and tomorrow.

A LETTER FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP CHAIR

We are grateful to each of you who have returned your pledge card for 2022 and made a financial commitment to support the work of God in this place. The commitment of time and talents which is willingly given by each person is a testament to the love, care and involvement of our congregation.

The commitment of financial resources is paramount to keeping the church vital and the doors open. As each of us considers our income and expenses for the future year, so does the church. Our stewardship campaign continues. Our opportunities to minister to others remains open to the Spirit of God.

If you have not already done so, would you prayerfully consider your financial commitment to God's work in this place, so that we, as ministers of God, honor our mission statement — "Reaching up to God and Reaching out to People"?

You do minister. Continue to do so with the admiration and the appreciation of the Stewardship Committee. We will gratefully continue to receive your pledges for 2022 in the way that speaks to you as you continue to speak with (and respond to) God.

Respectfully yours, Peg Empet

Commitments to Date: \$82,978

Expected 2022 Budget: \$152,000

Trustee Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2021

Attending: Gary Housel, Rich Masters, Rick Masters, Irv Needham, Kandy Wellman

Meeting was called to order by Gary Housel.

Old Business:

Gary and Dick Berish fixed the flood light and the cover of the electrical box on the back of the church.

New Business:

Trustees discussed the possibility of adding a couple of "reserved" parking spaces that are not specifically designated handicapped parking spaces for those members of the Church that it would benefit to be able to park closer to the Church entrance. This will be reconsidered in the spring once the parking lot construction is complete.

We need to confirm if Brandon Bennett will still be plowing this winter and also confirm that Tanner Stout will do the shoveling.

Rick made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Richie.

Respectfully Submitted, Rick Masters

Deacon Minutes

11-11-2021

Attending: Holli Chichester, Katherine Doolittle, Will Hagenbuch, Linda Lindsey, via zoom Teresa Lamber-son and Tammy Stout

Will opened with prayer.

Communion: There was some concern about reaching into a box for the elements. The elements will be spaced on a table with labels for regular and gluten-free. This should reduce cross contamination. Was noted that we do need a grape free choice during communion.

CE-Christmas Pageant: Pageant will be during the worship service on December 19, 2021. The pageant will be in the place of the sermon on this day.

Advent: The sanctuary will have partial decorations by Nov. 28 and will be completely decorated the following Sunday. We plan for traditional services with the lighting of the Advent Wreath by our new members. The Persons lighting the Advent Wreath will lead the Call to Worship as part of the Lighting. Advent starts 11/28/2021. Holli will contact the Empets for the first Sunday.

Christmas Tree Lighting: Tree of Hope. Holli has purchased large shatter-proof ornaments that can be re-used each year. They will be hung by pipe cleaners to go on and off more easily. People will think of their hopes for the new year as they hang an ornament.

Bibles: Bibles have been ordered for the children and teen. The Quest (Teen Bible) will be given.

Bible Study: We will talk with Craig to see if he is interested in a new Sunday and/or evening Bible Study.

Next Meeting: December 13, 2021 at 6:00

THE ANNUAL PETTING BLESSING

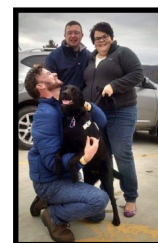
The Parking Lot Pet Blessing this year brought smiles, wags, and even good kisses

Pet people get what this day is. It's the opportunity to give to our four-legged loves a part of the blessing that they give to us each day. "Pets" can seem like a shallow word to those who know the daily comfort and deep connection to one of God's greatest gifts to humankind—a faithful love that transcends words in a dog, cat, or other tenderhearted companion. Since our animals show us such unconditional love, we want to offer that love to them. The pet blessing is one of the places this happens.

This year's November 7th Pet Blessing was quiet and wonderful, meaningful and filled with love. Good connections were made. Good conversations happened. I am available to bless your pet at any time. I make house calls! If you were unable to make it to the pet blessing this year, please contact me at 570-267-5137. I can come to your home.

I am not the only one who can bless your loving companion. You can do this, too. Admittedly, this may sound strange or funny to a non-pet person, but blessing the soul that blesses you? I am not the only one who can do this. You can bless your pet, too. Having lost pets suddenly and unexpectedly, I have learned to bless my four-legged pack daily. Do the same.

Lord, You gift us in so many ways. One gift for many of us is in the comfort of a dog, cat, horse or other pet. We who are especially loved by such faithful friends know what a blessing they truly are. Encourage us to bless those who bless us. May our hands and our words of love come from You, our Father, so that our love for our loved ones is known, felt, and celebrated. Amen.



Here is the Income and Expenses for September 2020 and 2021 and YTD

	2020	2021	General Fund year to Date for 2021
Income:	\$9,254.09	\$9,894.70	\$98,625.90
Expense:	\$9,469.43	\$10,264.50	\$108,209.21
Total:	-\$215.34	-\$369.87	-\$9,583.23

** \$10,309.62 taken from other programs and accounts to cover deficit

Operation Christmas Child

Sponsored
by
Missionary.



We delivered
60 boxes to
South New
Milford
Baptist
Church .

These boxes will be tracked to see where they are
delivered!

Thank you for your support in this worthy
outreach!

Stewardship

Stewardship met on 11 Nov at 6:30 in the lecture hall. In attendance were Peg Empet, Michelle Estabrook, Nancy Burris, Ellen Holdredge, Shirley Masters, Wendy Phillips, Will Hagenbuch, Julia Gardner, and Kay Gow

October minutes were read and approved as written.

Julia gave us the income and expenses for October and informed us at the end of October we were \$726.39 to the good, but reminded us that there were still some expenses to be paid for the next two months. She also asked us when we fill out vouchers for items we've purchased for any activities we sponsor to fill the voucher out properly so the right account can be charged for the expense. Pledges to date have added up to \$42,660. We are hoping more people will pledge or on-line when they watch the service so we will be able to meet our expenses and stay within the amount that has been budgeted for the year.

The final plans were made for the HVA Fall Party we are sponsoring for the residents on November 14th @ 2:00. Ellen and Michelle are in charge of the two games which are Hangman and Pictionary. Peg is bringing crackers, cheese, and grapes. Kay is making sure we have water, coffee, and tea. Also, she is bringing the board which will be used for the games along with an easel to set the board on. Peg is bringing dry erase markers to be used for the games.

There will be no meeting in December.

Respectively submitted, Kay Gow, Secretary

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

SPIRE SPONSOR

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

STEVE DECKER

AND

MARJORIE BRAINARD

* SHERRY DECKER





Children's Christmas Pageant

December 19, 2021

10:00 am

during the Worship Service

Take Home Goodie Bags

Willing Workers Quarterly Meeting

November 3, 2021

The big group of Willing Workers met in the Lecture Hall on Wednesday, November 3, 2021 at 7:00PM. Kay Gow called the meeting to order. The treasurer's report was reviewed. Discussion on how much of pledge had been paid. Last year the Willing Worker treasury was not large and we weren't sure about our future money makers so we lowered the pledge. Several money makers later, the treasury has been pumped up. Ellen Holdredge made a motion that we add to our pledged amount to give \$6000 to general fund and \$700 to OCWM. 2nd by Maureen. Passed. (This was our usual pledge amount in past years).

OLD BUSINESS

Some review of the fair. The new space went well. It was lots of hard work to get ready with Kandy, Holli, Louise, Karen, and others who showed up to help. Total amount taken in was about \$700 less than 2 years ago. Next year we could use a few more Welsh cookies and some more fudge. There was a request for Danny Duzits.

The yard sale went well. It also was a lot of work. Probably there will be another one next year. Save your stuff.

The roast beef dinner will be Saturday, April 9. Will the price of beef make ticket prices too high? A discussion on beef prices followed. Buy now? Wait? Consensus was wait until January/February and then see.

There was a review of funeral dinners, possible menus, and paying for things purchased for a dinner. We realize that we can make adjustments to what is on the paper.

NEW BUSINESS

The kitchen range had a burner that kept clicking even after it was lit. Kandy called the company and they suggested turning the power off to it for a few minutes to see if it would reset. It did. Problem solved.

Kandy is doing a Rada catalog sale. The link was sent in an email. There is a paper catalog in the office. Proceeds to go to the big group.

Maureen made a motion that in 2022 our pledge to the church will be \$6000 to general fund and \$700 to OCWM. 2nd by Priscilla. Passed.

Discussion on the cooked pork that is in the freezer. The decision was made to make pulled pork, packaged in quart containers for takeout. It will be preorder only. \$15 a quart. Proceeds to go to the church general fund. Dates of sale are December 11 (order by Dec 4) and January 22. Advertisement to go in Spire, on-line. Etc.

Ellen mentioned the need to do some "spring" cleaning. A date needs to be chosen.

Election of officers: Motion by Maureen to keep the same officers. 2nd by Ivie. Passed President-Kay Gow, Vice president-Sharon Decker/ JoAnn Titus, Treasurer-Sharon Kinney, Secretary-Ellen Holdredge.

Group Reports: All groups worked at fair and yard sale.

Harford – 2 present

North Harford- 4 present Worked at 2 funeral dinners, held a meeting, gave money to Interfaith Capital drive.

Kingsley-4 present Held 2 meetings, worked at two funeral meals, voted to give money to some charities, planning to go out to eat at Fireplace in December, holding a preorder soup sale in November, sponsored a hole at the golf tournament, pricing knives in February.

Next meeting is February 2, 2022 at 1:00 in the Lecture Hall.

Ellen Holdredge, Secretary



Congratulations to Mountain View student, Genevieve Larkin, for bridging to a Girl Scout Ambassador.

Genevieve held her bridging ceremony in the church sanctuary following worship on Sunday, November 7th. Immediate family, friends, and Pastor Will who were on hand for a meaningful candle lighting ceremony.

“Having the ceremony here in Harford is really significant to Genevieve,” her mother Heather Wolfe Larkin shared. “She has done all of her bridging ceremonies here in the church. She’s had the Harford church as a part of her scouting experience since she began.”

Genevieve has enjoyed 12 years in scouting. Being a Juliette Ambassador is a crowning achievement.

To become a Juliette Ambassador, Genevieve led a hike for Brownies and Juniors. On the trail, she taught younger scouts about hiking safety. This included how to use a compass and leave no trace in the woods. She completed other online ambassador activities and responsibilities and attended the virtual Gold Award Ceremony. Here she learned about other Gold Award projects.

As an Ambassador, Genevieve is looking forward to accomplishing community service and earning leadership awards. She has already earned her Gild Award, the highest award a Girl Scout can receive.

Many of us remember Genevieve and fellow Girl Scout Brianna Boswell. Both community-minded activists made the two handsome, heavy, timeless benches that flank the Memorial Garden. Brianna is the one who gifted the community with The Little Library, a free book exchange housed very visibly on the stone wall at the front the corner of the cemetery and the church’s front lawn.



December and January Greeters and Ushers

Dec. 5- Betty Lou Bennett and Ken Bennett
Dec 12- Judy Mitchell and Nancy Burris
Dec 19- Lynnette Millard and Peggy Empet
Dec 24- Priscilla Allen and Linda Lindsey
Dec 26- Dee Archer and Karen Jones

Jan. 2 - Karen Jones and Kay Gow
Jan. 9 - Bill Chichester and Dale Feger
Jan. 16- Nicole Bernosky and James Bernosky
Jan. 23- Leanne Colwell and Karen Jones
Jan. 30- Susan Green and Buddy Green

**Annual Reports are due to Judy no later than
December 22, 2021**

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?

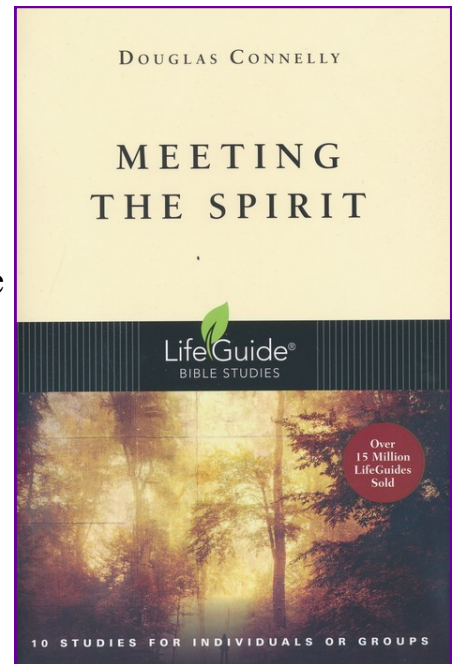
Would you like to see if you can encounter the Spirit in a life changing way?

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 8:45. **You can enter the Bible Study at any time so newcomers are welcome!**

Also, Craig Stout will be offering this same study on an evening. Please call Craig and let him know if you are interested and what days and times work for you.

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

at 570-498-7090 to join!



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 and we now have a time of fellowship from 9:30-10:00 each Sunday.

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 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

December 14 , 2021
and
January 11, 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!!!

The front landscaping around the church still needs love!

Please call the office if you are willing to
help beautify our Church Grounds. **570-434-2260**



Correspondence:

Dear Members of Council,

This communication shall serve as an update to the status of the bell choir.

When the bell choir ceased rehearsing because of COVID-19, we had a strong core group that filled out two octaves. Since then, we have lost one member who is no longer with the church and two other members are unable to make a firm commitment. I have secured one replacement ringer and have interest from one ringer who unfortunately cannot rehearse on Monday evenings. I am talking with possible ringers from other churches but at this time we do not have a full roster. I've been told that existing members of the bell choir are recruiting, but no one has been in touch with me about that.

Naturally, this is discouraging to me as the director, but it is my hope to begin rehearsing soon with one or more "substitute" ringers from other churches in the hope that we'll be able to perform Christmas music. That would enable us to ring two octaves with four vacancies remaining in the third octave.

It goes without saying that additional ringers are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob DeLuca

Director, Harford Bell Choir

To All Our Friends at Harford Congregational,

All of us at Summer Lunch Box gratefully appreciate your recent gift. Thank you for your \$55.00 donation. You have been a long-tie supporter of the Summer Lunch Box. Your contribution, in various forms, have been instrumental in allowing the Summer Lunch Box Program to continue efforts to reach hungry area kids.

We deeply appreciated your support.

Sincerely, Lorraine A. Stanton

For the Summer Lunch Box Program



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 First Congregational Church?

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

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

-Angie Amy Poxon-Ehrard

-Paula Adams

-Kandy's father and his wife

-Bonnie Appleman

-Lois Terrace

-Robin Arnold

-Gina Yarrish's daughter Missy

-Small businesses struggling

-Patrick Simons

-Sandy Compton

-Harry Gardner

-Tiffany's employee with throat cancer

-Sal Armetta and family

-Steve Holtsmaster

-Karen Jones relative

-Kristin Williams

-Lola and John Zimmerman

-Barb Wojcik Parraga

-Lynn Hernandez

-Braxton MacDowell

-Pastor Tim and his church

-Dave Kurosky

-friend of Lauri Demark

-Doris Wages daughter Laura (brain tumor)

-Makel Silfee

-Karen Doolittle

-Earl Gow

-Bonnie Appleman

-Kathy Shelansky

- Lynn Franklin

-Tammy Stout's Aunt Betty

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

-Celia Warner

-friend of Aubrey Lillian that lost her husband





Weinberg Food Bank

Harford First Congregational Church



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

Next distributions December 17, 2021 from 4:30-5:30

And January 28, 2022 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.



Directory Update

Aubrey Daniels
163 Bishop Road
Kingsley, PA 18826



Chad & Kara Batzel
Hunter O'Malley, Aspen Batzel
9905 State Route 106
Kingsley, PA 18826

Brendan & Rebecca Herbert
Lydia, Dean, Cole
10979 State Route 106
Kingsley, PA 18826

Alice Archer
#303 Harford Village Apartments
Harford, PA 18823

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.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

December Birthdays

December 05 Margaret Maza
December 06 Wayne Frederici
Doug Phelps
Wendy Phillips
December 07 Jacquie Phillips
December 12 Betty Lou Bennett
December 13 Ed Morrison
JoAnn Titus
December 16 Lynola Carey
December 18 JoAnn Grimes
December 19 Bonnie Love-Colwell
Rich Graf
Rick Masters
Amanda (Tyler) Norris
December 21 Olivia Zick
Carol Morrison
December 24 Barbara Chidester
December 25 Grace Allen
December 28 Ann Marie Graf
Tammy Stout
December 29 Michael Lamberson
Danielle Urda
December 31 Rick & Beth Ann Masters



January Birthdays

January 02 Lisa Higgins
January 04 David Schulte, III
January 06 Alyssa Clarkson
Anita Millard
January 07 Taven
January 15 John and Lola Zimmerman
January 22 Sherry Decker
Maya Mitchell
January 23 Aiden Miller
January 24 Melissa Heller
January 25 Ashley (Millard) Parsons
January 29 Bailey Ann Millard
January 30 Sue Ann Furney
Karen Jones
Linda Lindsey
January 31 Charlene Batzel
Bill Chichester

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 February to be included in the Spire to:
Firstchurchspire@gmail.com

by the 15th of January 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 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.



Tired of cooking every night?



**Willing
Worker
Pulled Pork
Sale**

**One Quart of Pulled Pork
in Sauce**

Pre-Order by January 16

For January 22, 2022 drive by pick-up

11:00 - 1:00 (By Double Doors)

Pre-Order by February 20

For February 26, 2022 drive by pick-up

11:00 - 1:00 (By Double Doors)

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

hollischichester@gmail.com

December 2021

December 2021							January 2022						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30	31					

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Nov 28	29	30	Dec 1	2	3	4
7:30am Fire Co. 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice	9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary		7:00am cocoa Delivery 10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm Council		Last day to order pulled pork
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice	9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary		10:00am Pastor in office		11:00am Pick up pulled pork 12:00pm LH rented
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice 7:00pm Trustees (PO)	7:30am Men's Breakfast (Binghams) 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 9:30am Pastoral 6:00pm Choir		10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm NO Stewardship	4:30pm Weinberg Pickup	12:00pm Wreaths across America
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Youth Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 12:00pm Ladies lunch (Binghams) 4:00pm Bells practice	9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir		10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm NO Council	6:00pm Christmas Eve Service	
26	27	28	29	30	31	Jan 1, 22
NO SS 8:45am Bible Study 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service 7:00pm Boy Scouts (LH)	9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice	NO Ugly Quilts 6:00pm Choir		10:00am Pastor in office		

January 2022

January 2022

February 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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	31					

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					

SUNDAY		MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Dec 26	27	28	29	30	31	Jan 1, 22	
2 NO SS 7:30am Fire Co. 8:45am Bible Study 9:30am Fellowship time	3 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice 7:30pm Harford Fair mtg	4 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	5 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	6 10:00am Pastor in office	7 10:00am Pastor in office	8 10:00am Pastor in office	15 11:00am Pulled Pork Sale
9 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service	10 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice 7:00pm Trustees (PO)	11 7:30am Men's Breakfast (Binghams) 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	12 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH) 6:00pm Choir	13 10:00am Pastor in office	14 10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm Stewardship (LH)	21 10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm Stewardship (LH)	22 11:00am Pulled Pork Sale
16 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service	17 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 12:00pm Ladies lunch 4:00pm Bells practice	18 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH) 6:00pm Choir	19 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 1:00pm Missionary (LH) 6:00pm Choir	20 10:00am Pastor in office 6:30pm Stewardship (LH)	27 10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm Council (LH)	28 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up	29 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up
23 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service	24 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice	25 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	26 9:30am Ugly Quilts (LH) 6:00pm Choir	27 10:00am Pastor in office 6:00pm Council (LH)	28 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up	29 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up	5 4:30pm Weinberg-pick up
30 8:45am Bible Study 9:00am SS (LH) 9:30am Fellowship time 10:00am Service	31 9:30am Quarterback mtg (PO) 4:00pm Bells practice	Feb 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